

League for Socialist Action/ Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière

Discussion Bulletin 1972

Contents

DRAFT QUEBEC RESOLUTION

- submitted by the Political Committee -

NOTE TO THE READER: With this document, the new youth leadership of the LSO/LSA draw a distinction between their thinking and many of the previous analyses of the movement on the dynamics of Quebec labor and indépendantiste movements. Ross Dawson proposed to "lay aside" much of the document, rather than vote against it, until the benefit of more experiences in Quebec's complex politics could be assessed, especially in light of certain doubtful ideas expressed this document, which indicate a turning towards of the LSO and display a lack of confidence in its ability to meet future challenges or steer a clear fruitful course ahead. We include some critical notes by a future leader of Dawson's tendency as a guide to the growing dispute. See also the previous document "An Action Program for Quebec" of June 1972.

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The sequence of massive social conflicts which has shaken Quebec since the LSA/LSO's last convention took place in 1970, while confirming the line of previous resolutions of the LSA/LSO, poses important new challenges for the analysis of revolutionary Marxists.

This resolution, submitted by the Political Committee to the January, 1973 convention of the LSA/LSO, rests on the overall general line on Quebec adopted by the 1968 and 1970 conventions. The resolutions of these conventions are available in pamphlet form under the titles "Vive le Quebec Libre" (1968) and "For an Independent Socialist Quebec" (1970).

The aims of this resolution are specific and limited. It analyzes the meaning of the major events of the class struggle in Quebec since the writing of the 1970 resolution, examines the present situation of the class struggle in Quebec, and outlines the tasks and perspectives for the work of the LSA/LSO in Quebec in the coming period.

The Rise of Class Struggles

For ten years Quebec has been swept by rising class struggles, rooted in a series of deep-going changes in Quebec society and in world capitalism. This development has led in the past five years to a number of political crises in Quebec, unleashed by massive mobilizations.

Quebec's character as an oppressed nation within confederation was explained by the LSA/LSO's 1968 resolution on Quebec. "Its character as a nation," the document stated, "is revealed by its possession of a distinct language, culture and history of its own, and above all by its well-defined national consciousness," heightened by the possession of a distinct national territory. The national oppression of Quebec by the English Canadian ruling bourgeoisie is revealed in the denial of Quebec's right of political and cultural self-determination, by the prevailing system of language discrimination against those who speak Quebec's national language, and by the super-exploitation of Quebec by imperialism, through English Canadian and American imperialist corporations, which has brought with it relative economic backwardness and Quebec's exceptionally high level of unemployment. ^(A) also relative economic advancement vis-à-vis the rest of Canada

The new rise of nationalism is reflected in the massive support for independence and widespread actions for national rights and in defense of the French language. The largest mobilization to date was during the 1969 Bill 53 crisis, in defense of the French language in the schools. If independent mass actions have been smaller since that time, in large measure because of the impact of the Parti Québécois, there is every indication of deepening opposition to national oppression, which will find militant expression in the coming period. ^(B) *downturn in mass action => downturn in radicalization ; merely absorbed by the P.Q.?*

Over the same period the trade union movement has experienced a

NOTE by Gord D.

A. also relative economic advancement vis-à-vis the rest of Canada

B. (Is not this) downturn in mass action, downturn in radicalization (due to it being) merely absorbed by the Parti Québécois?

rapid numerical growth, a wave of militant struggles, and now a growing politicization, nationalism and radicalization of the more militant layers. Its struggles have led to repeated confrontations with the provincial government, both because of the latter's strike-breaking role in major conflicts, and because of the prominence of strikes in the public sector; the April-May 1972 confrontation was the most menacing to bourgeois order in Quebec history.

The student movement which swept the Cegeps in the 1968 occupation wave went on to provide the shock troops of nationalist mass actions. If subsequently pressed back, it has maintained a high level of militancy and is now on the upswing. Other sectors of Quebec society have been caught up in this process of generalized radicalization; one recent and highly revolutionary development is the beginning in Quebec of the women's liberation movement.

In conjunction with the increasing economic difficulties and decreasing maneuverability of Quebec's capitalist rulers, the rising challenge of these mass struggles, and the new aspirations and needs of the broad masses have contributed to an atmosphere of social and political crisis. The inability of the bourgeoisie to meet the urgent needs of the Quebec masses is evident to increasing numbers, and it finds increasing difficulty in countering and beating back the massive challenges to its rule.

The Global Framework

The rising struggles in Quebec are not an isolated phenomenon. They are part of the new rise of world revolution, and the explosion of revolutionary struggles in the colonial world, in the dominant capitalist countries and even in the bureaucratized workers states. The upsurge in Quebec is inspired above all by the wave of national liberation struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and in internal colonies which has been in the vanguard of world revolution since the Second World War.

This rise of world revolution will deepen in the framework of the growing problems of the world capitalist economy following the end of the long postwar "boom". The world economic outlook of capitalism is now marked by the threat of tariff and trade wars, of international monetary crises, of simultaneous recessions in the main imperialist countries and by an intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries. On the world scale, class contradictions are exacerbated. The oppressed masses are thrown against the structures and the ideology of capitalism in decay, against exploitation and oppression.

National Oppression in the Imperialist Epoch

A fundamental and necessary aspect of the imperialist epoch -- that is, the epoch where capital outgrows the framework of the nation state and where monopoly is substituted for free competition -- is the division of the capitalist world between imperialist countries and their colonial subjects, be they colonies in the classic form, semi-colonies, or internal colonies like Quebec.² In the imperialist heartlands, the oppression and super-exploitation of minority and subject nationalities is maintained, and powerful movements for national rights and for national liberation are developing.

Obviously, in absolute terms, the Quebec economy is not of the classic colonial type. The proletariat, not the peasantry, constitutes the great majority of the nation. Industry, not agriculture, plays the leading role in the economy. This industry is modern, highly monopolized, and has developed a level of productive efficiency among the highest in the world. (not surprising in an advanced capitalist country) (A)

But relative to the North American economy considered as a whole, Quebec is limited to the status of an internal colony, furnishing raw materials and cheap labor to the foreign monopolies which dominate it through the federal state at Ottawa and which own the key sectors of its economy. as it does for the Maritimes

If it is true to say that the national oppression of Quebec was born of the economic infrastructure of Canadian capitalism which was gradually established after the military conquest of 1759, it is just as true to say that this national oppression of Quebec characterizes the form of political domination by the Canadian bourgeoisie laid out by the act of Confederation in 1867.

The upsurge of class struggles, above all of national struggles, demonstrates more vividly than ever, for the Quebecois, the English Canadians and the world, the colonised situation of Quebec. The reactions of the federal government, like the War Measures Act of October 1970, add to this. This national oppression, first obstacle to the economic, political and cultural development of the Quebec nation, quickly became the central question of political life.

The Right to Self-Determination Denied

Imperialist domination of Quebec is expressed politically by ~~sovereignty~~, the refusal of the federal government to grant Quebec the constitutional rights demanded by the provincial government and by the population in general, and by the clear refusal by the federal government to grant the Quebecois the right to decide their constitutional status themselves, freely, including the choice of leaving Confederation to set up an independent state, which is a more and more popular option for Quebecois. (B)

Quebec's independence, even if achieved under a bourgeois leadership, is hardly conceivable without a process of political upheaval and mass conflict which would strike at the foundations of bourgeois stability. In addition, independence could be a irremediable blow to the viability of the Canadian state, a vital bulwark of world imperialism. It would introduce into the heart of North America a new state formation, led by a feeble and inexperienced bourgeoisie, opposed by powerful anti-capitalist movements. The Canadian and American bourgeoisies are well aware of the dangers this would pose for them. They aim to combat independence fiercely, as shown by the War Measures Act, and by statements such as Trudeau's during the recent federal elections that, faced with the threat of independence, "the use of force cannot be excluded."

The Canadian bourgeoisie could be forced to change its tactics and to grant substantial concessions if compelled to by the development of mass struggles. But there is no evidence that the Parti

NOTES by Gord D.

A. not surprising in an advanced capitalist country; (para. 2) as it does for the Maritimes

B. sovereignty does not necessarily require this! What about Claude Wagner's statements (a leading bourgeois politician's views to the contrary); is this excluded?

*This is a most
speculative*

Quebecois dream of independence through a "cold" process is moving toward realization. Events such as the Victoria constitutional conference of June 1971 and the Castonguay-Munro debate on Quebec's jurisdiction over social security indicate that even a measure of autonomy for Quebec within the federal state -- to say nothing of independence -- will not be granted unless the relationship of class forces is altered by the impact of a substantial rise of nationalism and powerful mass struggles.

Deformation of the Quebec Economy

National oppression expresses itself as well on the economic level where the crushing domination of Canadian and U.S. monopolies increasingly deforms the Quebec economy. The gap between the living standards of each class and social layer in Quebec and that of their Canadian or U.S. counterparts has not been reduced. Between 80% and 90% of Quebec workers are employed by English-speaking bosses, English Canadians or Americans, who control 80 % of the wealth of corporations in Montreal. The ten most significant industrial employers in Quebec are English Canadian or American.

These foreign monopolies largely emphasize extractive industries of raw materials which furnish few jobs, or jobs for unskilled workers. These foreign monopolies undertake a conscious discrimination in salary levels against French-speaking workers. Heavy industry is much less significant in Quebec compared with Ontario; it makes up 31% of Quebec manufacturing, compared with 52% in Ontario. This has important consequences for the standard of living, on the rate of growth, on unemployment and on the potential of technological innovation. In fact, heavy industry pays the highest wages, requires the most trained work force, develops most quickly, has the greatest "spread effects" (the birth of related industries) and leads to the greatest amount of scientific research.

Among all ethnic groupings in Quebec, the Francophones (80% of the population) are in 12th place on the list of average incomes, followed by the Italians and the Native peoples. The salary of a male non-Francophone Quebecois is 45% higher than that of a Franco-phone. In 1970, the average personal income of a Quebec Francophone was \$2574, while in Ontario the average personal income for the same year was \$3584, which amounts to a standard of living for a person in Ontario which averages 40% higher than that of a Quebec Francophone. If the unemployment rate in Quebec was about 5% in 1965-66 (almost twice as high as in Ontario), after 1970 it has varied between 8 and 10%.

The imperialist corporations which shut down in Quebec whenever they feel like it do not meet with any response from the government of Quebec, which stands powerless before the monopolies.

This deformation of the Quebec economy has been accelerated by the economic policy of the federal government. The nature of federal spending in Quebec leads to a greater dependence by denying to Quebec its fair share of development expenses. The federal government discriminates against the Quebec economy in research, agriculture and transportation grants.

Capital Speaks English in Quebec

Quebec's national oppression has deepened on the cultural plane where the Quebec government was forced for the first time by imperialism in 1968-69 to pass Quebec laws to accelerate the Anglicization of the Francophones, pressured by the far-reaching implications of the new language demands of the masses (St. Leonard), and by the reaction to this of the imperialist ruling class (threats of economic reprisals; promises of increased investments).

Since the military conquest of 1759, language has been the key factor dividing the oppressed nation from its oppressors, as well as the key element in the national identity of the Quebecois. The consistent pressure of Anglicization against the national language of the Quebecois has its historical origins in the attempt of British and English Canadian capitalists to establish a national state in Canada from one ocean to another, united by a railroad, and based on a centralized market and, as far as possible, on a single national language. Such national states are the most efficient basic unit for capitalism.

In addition to the economic reason, that is the need for English to dominate the market, the system of linguistic discrimination and the privileges of the English language in every domain of Quebec society is based on political considerations. The growing discrimination against the French language is a weapon for the Canadian bourgeoisie to hold the Quebecois in subjugation and weaken them numerically, as well as to divide the workers of Quebec according to language, by a racism expressed initially in the Durham report of 1838. This process of Anglicization has been speeded up over the past five years.

When the Quebec government made itself the open agent of this policy in passing Law 63 in September, 1969, it became more clear than ever that it is powerless and in close alliance with imperialism. The Quebec government responded to the inflexibility of imperialism in this domain and to the stronger and stronger pressures of the masses, by giving way to imperialism and by proposing laws 85, 62, 63, 28, and 27. There is a host of statistics, as well as the plans to close 42 French schools in Montreal in the next two years, to show the disastrous effect of these laws on the French language, accelerating more rapidly than ever the reinforcement of the privileges of the Anglophone minority, the Anglicization of the Francophones, and the integration of immigrants into the Anglophone community.

There is an immediate possibility that the Bourassa government will amend Law 63, along the lines proposed by the Parti Quebecois, that is, to "integrate the immigrants into the French-language school system" without changing in any way the privileges and the school system of the English-language minority. This will not alter at all the discrimination or the Anglicization suffered by the French language majority. Such a racist measure, impossible to apply, would only further divide the immigrant and Quebecois workers and sow illusions among the Quebecois as to who is responsible for national oppression and as to the possibility of eliminating it without mass action.

"Bilingualism" in the federal public service, and "concessions" to Francophone minorities living outside Quebec are only symbolic, serving as a smoke screen to hide the continuing destruction of the French language in Quebec. Even the law on the compulsory use of French in labelling of food products sold in Quebec seems about to disappear under the pressure of the Steinberg-Dominion-A and P campaign. Since 1970 and in the face of 168 complaints to the government, the ministers responsible have never undertaken the slightest action against those who have broken the law adopted in March 1967.

The Deepening of Class Contradictions Within the Nation

The deepening of the imperialist oppression of the Quebec nation in its entirety and the new rise of the national struggle has not brought about a coming together of Quebec social classes, but rather has qualitatively deepened the entirety of the contradictions between oppressed and oppressors within the nation. While the national bourgeoisie sees itself under more and more pressure from the imperialist bourgeoisie, and less and less able to compete with it on the Quebec market, this has not led it to break with imperialism, because it is entirely dependent on imperialism to maintain itself in power against the Quebec masses. Its envious hatred of imperialism is always subordinated to the internal class struggle.

(A) Rather than break with the imperialist bourgeoisie, which would require the mobilization and arming of the Quebec masses, the "national" bourgeoisie has attacked the workers and other oppressed in Quebec more fiercely, to make them pay the price of imperialist domination. The new attacks of the "national" bourgeoisie and the Quebec government against workers, youth, women and farmers, and against the democratic rights of all Quebecois, flow from the national oppression of Quebec and the nationalism of the masses.

Since 1970, the fiercest attacks on the Quebec working class's standard of living and rights have been made by the Quebec bourgeoisie and the Quebec government. They have been expressed above all in a "rationalization" of working conditions (in the private sector, to improve competitive capacity against imperialism; in the public sector, to reinforce Quebec's governmental powers at the expense of the employees) and through a reduction or elimination of certain trade union rights.

Other Contradictions of Quebec Society

(B) The creation of the Cegeps at the beginning of 1967 was an attempt to rationalize the contradictions of the system of education which had been thoroughly reformed during the "quiet revolution". Since the crisis broke out in the Cegeps the new problems of capitalism in Quebec have continued to reveal themselves in the school system through attacks against the democratic rights of the students, through the content of courses which are less and less relevant, through school facilities which are less and less sufficient, due to the cutbacks in the budget allocated for education, as well as through the growing alienation among the students.

If Quebecois women succeeded in winning some concessions like the

NOTES by Gord D.

A. (this) requires an insurrection

B. (an attempt to) "rationalize" the authoritarianism and social cutbacks

right to be on a jury and the right to go into certain taverns which are designated "brasseries", they nonetheless remain victims of discriminatory laws. Canadian laws on abortion, which leave it to committees in the hospitals to decide whether or not a woman can get an abortion, are even more discriminatory in Quebec, because the bulk of Quebec hospitals are administered or strongly influenced by the Catholic church. As for child care, Quebec women are in an even worse situation than Canadian women, for Quebec has less child care per capita than any other province. The gap between the average salary of Quebec women and the average salary of men has not been substantially reduced. Even in the public service, this was underlined by Civil Service Minister l'Allier's anti-woman statements during the April strike. Discrimination in salaries continues. Women suffer discrimination at school and domestic slavery at home.

In the past five years Quebec farmers have been discriminated against by the agricultural policy of the federal government, a policy clearly oriented to the interests of Western farmers, particularly with regard to fodder grains (which Quebecois have to pay twice as much for as the Western producers), farm credit (where Quebec farmers have access to only about 10 per cent of the funds provided by Ottawa) and imports of agricultural products.

As for the state of "democracy" in Quebec, it is enough to say that Quebec has the most repressive laws in Canada, even more so since 1970, and that the law is even less respected by the police and the courts. Quebec prisons boast a significant number of political prisoners. With the new Law 51 greatly enlarging arbitrary police powers, the situation in this regard can worsen in the next period.

The past two years have been marked by the continued rise of mass struggles in Quebec, which have often taken on explosive forms and posed acute crises within the nation. In fact, these struggles are the manifestation of heightened opposition among entire layers of the nation to the oppression they continue to suffer under.

This mass struggle, the national oppression of Quebec, and that oppression's exacerbation of all the conflicts within the nation as well as with the imperialist oppressors, have combined to produce a situation of great instability in Quebec today, posing the possibility of totally eliminating oppression through a transformation of society along socialist lines. *⇒ LSO with an action program.*

Struggles of the Masses

Among the principal movements which have developed in the struggle against the various expressions of capitalism in Quebec, it is the nationalist movement which, since 1967, has undergone the greatest growth and expansion. This movement, whose birth and development was analyzed in the 1970 convention resolution of the LSA/LSO, is the broadest and most powerful expression of Quebec nationalism since the time of the Patriote Rebellion of 1837-38.

Quebec nationalism is the growing consciousness of Quebecois of their

identity as a nation, of their common interests, problems and goals which flow from the situation of the Quebec nation, and of the need to act to change Quebec's status. This national consciousness has inspired the rapid growth of a nationalist movement over the past decade. It has taken form in the rise of independent mass struggles for national rights (Bill 63, St-Leonard); the infusion of political goals into national celebrations (St-Jean-Baptiste Day for a French Quebec, 1972); the tendency of the student and labor movements to incorporate nationalist demands and struggle to win them (French as the language of instruction; French as the language of work); the manifestations of independentism, including mass actions such as July 1, 1972, but seen principally in the massive Parti Quebecois; the existence of organizations for action around national goals, ranging from the Societe St-Jean-Baptiste to the Front Commun pour la Defense de la Langue Francaise, and other expressions.

Since its transformation into a mass movement in 1967-68, the nationalist movement has grown considerably. The consistent growth of the nationalist movement is demonstrated in several ways, of which the most impressive is the mass struggle undertaken against the destruction of the French language, against the federal government's violation of the right of Quebecois to self-determination, and against the national oppression they suffer in general.

It was above all in the battles against the attempts to anglicize the school system that the nationalist movement was able to mobilize mass demonstrations. From the time of the struggle to maintain the Aime-Renaud school in St-Leonard as a French-language school, for a policy of French unilingualism in the schools, and for the defeat of Bill 85, the nationalist movement has undertaken the fight against the "acquired rights" (i.e., privileges) of the English language and against new attacks, launched in the form of new laws by the Quebec government which aim to legalize and extend the privileges of the language of foreign capital, the language of the English minority in Quebec. Next was the "French McGill!" ("McGill francais!") campaign in March 1969 which assembled 10,000 demonstrators at the gates of Quebec's richest university (it enjoys the highest percentage of the total income of all of Quebec's universities) demanding that this fortress of English-speaking Quebecois' privileges be transformed into a French-language university in the service of the majority of the nation.

The struggle against Bill 63 in October 1969 was the largest struggle to date, uniting up to 40,000 persons on parliament hill in Quebec and including sectors of the labor movement. Two weeks of intense activity, of mass assemblies and of demonstrations in all the important cities of the nation ended in defeat and the adoption by the National Assembly of this Bill in the month of November. The government was weakened temporarily and isolated by this direct confrontation, which contributed in an important way to the fall from power of Jean-Jacques Bertrand's Union Nationale government in the April 1970 elections.

In spite of the defeat suffered during the struggle against Bill 63, the struggle against the anglicisation of Quebec was advanced by the labor movement in the form of strikes which, in part, fought the absence of the French language in the place of work and discrimination against

workers whose mother tongue is French. There have been strikes by the cardboard workers at Terrebonne, General Motors workers at Ste-Therese, Hydro-Quebec workers, and the beginnings of strike actions around language rights at the Ford warehouse at Pointe-Claire and at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Although the struggle against Bill 63 was officially headed by the Saint-Jean-Baptiste society, leading the Front du Quebec Francaise (FQF), the actions were actually pushed forward by the left wing of the FQF, the Coordination Committee, composed of the Ligue pour l'Integration Scolaire (LIS), the Front de Liberation Populaire (FLP), the Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes and other groups like the Comite Independance-Socialisme (CIS). These were many of the same forces that organized "McGill Francais" and who largely initiated, in collaboration with the unions, the response to the War Measures Act. These forces, above all the FLP, also organized the militant protests on the occasion of Quebec's national holiday, June 24, in 1968, '69 and 1970.

After the War Measures Act and with the disappearance of the FLP, the LIS and the CIS, the LSO has been able to play a key role in the organization of other nationalist actions, particularly between June 1971 and June 1972. There was the well publicized intervention of the LSO in the Parliamentary Commission on the constitution in Montreal, in April 1971, and then the demonstration of 5,000 against Confederation on July 1. The LSO succeeded, together with other nationalist and union forces, in establishing the Front Commun pour la Defense de la Langue Francaise (United Front to Defend the French Language), which succeeded in bringing together more than 8,000 demonstrators in front of the Hydro-Quebec building, where Premier Robert Bourassa has his Montreal office, to demand a French Quebec. Then there were the demonstrations of March 18, 1972 a largely symbolic action against Bill 63, and June 24, where the LSO and the FCDLF were able to push the St-Jean-Baptiste society and the union federations into reversing their decision not to organize the national holiday, with the result that more than 50,000 Quebecois participated in Old Montreal around the theme "Quebec Francais".

But the steady growth of nationalism is also reflected in its capacity to force the Bourassa government to say "no" to the federal government, as at the time of the Victoria conference on the constitution held in 1971, and to defend its positions during the present confrontation around Quebec's jurisdiction over social security.

Nationalism finds expression at every level of Quebec society, in every organization and institution, within the government, in the school boards, in every sector of the workers movement, in the student movement, and even in the Liberal Party youth and in the Chambers of Commerce. Every poll confirms the expansion of the nationalist movement, as does the growing strength of the Parti Quebecois, in its own deformed way.

The War Measures Crisis of 1970

In October 1970 the federal government unleashed a massive assault on the Quebecois people. The Trudeau cabinet suspended all civil liberties across the country. Quebec was occupied by over 7000 troops and almost

500 Quebecois were jailed on "suspicion". Over 3000 raids were carried out by police armed with sweeping new powers.

By this action, Trudeau aimed to strike a body blow at the growing nationalist movement, and particularly at its left wing, by repression of the principal spokespersons and intimidation of the others. At the same time he unleashed a torrent of propaganda linking radical independentism with violence, terrorism and even murder. If successful, this campaign would have allowed the government to enact permanent far-reaching repressive legislation which would be useful against the left, the student, and labor movements, not only in Quebec but also in English Canada.

When the terrorist Front de libération du Québec staged its kidnappings, Ottawa seized its opportunity. While it had short-range incentives for its intransigence (the weakness and division of the Quebec government; the beginnings of a popular movement in favor of the release of the political prisoners as demanded by the FLQ), its overriding goal was strategic and long-range: to set back the independentist movement whose by then substantial growth posed the danger of becoming a serious threat to its continuing rule.

But Trudeau failed to achieve his main aims. This historic experience can serve as a textbook of how to effectively fight repression through the mobilization of a mass movement in defense of democratic rights. It destroys the myth of the invulnerability of the state repressive machine to defense actions, demonstrating some of the ways such a mass defense movement can be built, and showing the force of a campaign oriented to mobilizing mass opposition instead of attempting to lobby the government or the ~~mass~~; through legalistic maneuvers. It shows the need for, and the force of, international--particularly pan-Canadian--actions.

From almost the very day the Act was imposed, Quebec labor spoke out against it. After some initial hesitations, the PQ joined the protests. With strong support from the very beginning on the campuses, the movement grew to embrace most sectors of Quebec society. This opposition took many forms, reflecting the diversity of forces and resources involved. But the central thrust of the protest, and its most effective aspects, were the means that made visible and brought together mass opposition, i.e. their through demonstrations, "spectacles" or other forms. An additional strength of the movement was its staying power, its ability to sustain itself over a number of months and through several different phases of the struggle.

The initial opposition to the War-Measures Act by the NDP in the House of Commons, together with numerous subsequent actions against the repression in English Canada, demonstrated that it had not been lined up solidly behind Trudeau's action.

This powerful defense movement was spurred by the dramatic and effective conduct of the chief defendants in the courts. They moved out aggressively to challenge the legality of the laws they were being held under, the bias of the courts, the attempts to gag them, and, most of all, the utter absence of evidence against them. Undeterred by heavy corrupt sentences, they used the courts as their platform and effectively turned the tables on the government, putting it in the dock.

The sentiment that the government had no case against the accused, and that the War Measures Act had been an immense injustice, grew to massive proportions by the early months of 1971. At the same time, Quebec labor began to revive. The government's attempt to declassify the teachers led to a very important struggle, which saw students also move in solidarity with the teachers. Other small labor struggles broke out. There were a number of labor occupations. The government could not maintain its stand, and was forced to drop the remaining War Measures Act trials.

The struggle against the War Measures Act repression was deeply imbued with nationalism. It could not be otherwise, for Trudeau's aim was to nip the nationalist movement in the bud. Those who were jailed were the leaders of the nationalist movement. The struggle took shape around the fight to free them, to reaffirm the legitimacy of nationalism and independentism. It was also very clearly a struggle against the government of the oppressor nation, against its army of occupation and its repression.

Despite its small size, the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière played an important role in these events. Two of its leaders were among the first wave of persons jailed, and the homes of its members were raided. Yet the LSO struck out aggressively. The campaign it was waging for the mayoralty of Montreal against Drapeau became a campaign against the War Measures. This was the theme of its election leaflet, meetings and propaganda. Manon Léger, the LSO candidate, attracted over 7,000 votes, not an insignificant achievement for the candidate of a small organization blacked out by the media and in a Montreal under occupation by the federal army. One week to the day after Trudeau invoked the War Measures, a special issue of the LSO's paper La Lutte Ouvrière was issued: "Immediate Withdrawal of federal troops" the front-page headline read. Ten thousand copies of this special issue were distributed, although the paper's editor was in jail.

The LSO intervened to build the movement of opposition, participating in the defence committees, advocating that they be non-exclusionist and oriented around the demand: repeal the War Measures Act; withdraw the troops; free the political prisoners. Meanwhile, the English-Canadian wing of the LSO, the League for Socialist Action, participated in and built the defence movement in English Canada. Important defence actions were in fact organized in English Canada, making a key contribution to the fight.

The struggle unleashed on October 17 revealed the ruthless nature of the Ottawa government. It will not give up its privileges lightly. (B) It does not intend to preside over the dissolution of Confederation and where necessary it will use the full weight of the federal state powers, wiping away democratic rights with the stroke of a pen. Nevertheless, Trudeau was defeated. The experience provides a stunning refutation of the "armed struggle" theorizing of partisans of the FLQ, who hope to spark the masses into action by isolated spectacular gestures. In fact, their gesture provided a "spark", that is the pretext, for the government to unleash a massive assault on the Quebecois. The government recognized its opportunity, for it well understood that because the masses were excluded from participating in the actions of the FLQ, and could only be passive spectators, they would be thrown

NOTES by Gord D.:

A. (general comments)

B. This statement is imprecise!

(A)

combint
socialist
propaganda
to direct work

This statement is imprecise!

back, demoralized and confused by the repression, This is in fact (A) what happened. This seems to contradict the statement about Trudeau's defeat?

The repression was defeated by another, more revolutionary strategy, designed to mobilize the masses -- potentially the most powerful force on earth. Such a strategy requires demands which are clear and easily comprehensible, and which channel the struggle in a correct direction. It also requires the unity in action of all forces willing to fight for such demands.

Ottawa suffered an important defeat in this struggle. The left and nationalist movements regained their rights, freed the prisoners, and blocked new repressive legislation. Nevertheless, the victory is far from permanent. Quebec City has successfully enacted and applied Bill 51, which restores to the police the power of search and seizure without warrant which they had under the War Measures Act. Flagrant violations of civil liberties are a freq. occurrence. To safeguard democratic rights is an ongoing, permanent struggle in Quebec today, and the success had in fighting the War Measures Act offers key lessons on how to successfully wage such struggles.

It remains true, however, that the WMA crisis undermined the authority of both the Trudeau and Bourassa regimes and their supporters, and polarized even further class conflicts within the nation. Independentism was considerably strengthened. And this victory laid the basis for the nationalist and labor struggles that were to come.

For an Independent and French Quebec

While it was the student movement which played the vanguard role and which was the main component in the 1968-69 struggle in St. Leonard and around the Bill 63 crisis (backed up often by the formal support of other layers), they were rapidly reinforced by the nationalist players of the petit-bourgeoisie (e.g. the St-Jean-Baptiste Society -- S.S.J.B.) and by larger and larger sectors of the union movement, which began in 1971 to take an official stand for a French Quebec, for the right of self-determination and even in favor of independence. The three union federations are members of the Mouvement Québec Français (MQF), a coalition initiated by the SSJB, which permits them to give expression, albeit in reformist fashion, to the nationalism of the union rank and file. Given the dominant role played by the SSJB in the MQF, the union movement has not acquired either an independent program or instrument for its participation in the nationalist movement, although the latter continues to grow in strength.

An important weakness of the nationalist movement is due to the capitulation of a good number of "socialists" to the PQ since 1970, and almost complete abstention of left organizations which, apart from the LSO and the LJS, stand outside the nationalist movement, and stand aside from the national struggle, sometimes even in open opposition to Quebec nationalism, policies which can only accentuate the specific weight of the union bureaucracy and the bourgeois and reformist wing of the nationalist movement. *ultra-lefts fuel reformism & petty-bourgeois nationalism*

The LSA-LSO asserted in its 1970 document on Quebec that the powerful rise of nationalism was taking shape "above all around massive

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. This seems to contradict the statement about Trudeau's defeat
- B. class instruments are embedded in independentist struggle
- C. indicative of power of nationalist sentiment and where radicals are at; organisations in national struggles linked to weakness of unions, weakness of class politics in general
- D. ultra-lefts fuel reformism and petit-bourgeois nationalism

mobilizations for the defense of the French language and around the developing sentiment for an independent Quebec." This statement has been confirmed since that time. The national struggle of the Quebecois against imperialist domination takes the form today of a struggle for political independence, for French as the language of work and instruction, and for the control of the economy by the Quebecois. This theme, as it is expressed today in the nationalist movement, can be summed up in the slogan: "For an Independent and French Quebec."

The Hegemony of the Parti Quebecois

The 1970 document noted that "the nationalist thrust has gone to the PQ," and recognized the almost unanimous support of nationalists for the PQ. The document also foresaw that the hegemony of the PQ would be undermined in a relatively short period: "The whole logic of the movement's development is toward confrontation with the PQ -- through growing conflict between the PQ and the broad labor, student and extraparliamentary nationalist movement and, within the PQ, between its mass base and the leadership. The most likely perspective (A) for the PQ is a polarization between its right wing which fears the mass movement and a left wing which reflects the pressure of the mass movement on the PQ; as this pressure builds, it will be accompanied by attempts to build factions, by splits and probably hasty expulsions of the left." ("For an Independent and Socialist Quebec", page 25).

Although this prediction remains valid, it has not been realized over the last two years. Rather everything indicates the strengthening of the PQ in the nationalist movement and a strengthening of its right wing leadership's control within the party, at the present time. But there remains a fundamental contradiction between the PQ's bourgeois nature and its working-class electoral base. *And the W.C. is not being led by class struggle, independentist leadership which challenges the PQ.* *Why?*

Despite the PQ's opposition to the very vital workers struggles (the demonstrations against La Presse, the April public workers strike, the November 1972 Hydro-Quebec strike, etc.) the union leadership's support of the PQ is more official and widespread than ever before.

The PQ concluded a fund drive for \$300,000 in front of 22,000 supporters in the Montreal Forum in March 1972 -- the largest rally by a political party in the history of Canada. The PQ had collected more than \$600,000. The recruitment campaign carried parallel to the federal election campaign produced a similar result: the PQ recruited more than 30,000 members to maintain its membership at its peak, 60,000. Within the PQ there is no opposition today with any degree of coherence. The PQ has succeeded in publishing a whole series of position papers (on the economy, agriculture, the federal elections, etc.) without meeting the slightest objections from within its ranks. Even the "left wing" led by Pierre Bourgault seems to be well integrated since Bourgault's addition to the national executive. The PQ at the moment is more homogeneous than ever despite episodic "confrontations", of symbolic character, every six months (Burns on the La Presse demonstration, Bourgault on the 16th of October demonstration)

The PQ's hegemony among students and nationalist workers began in the period following the passing of Bill 63 by the two old parties of Quebec, despite the PQ's abstention from the struggle, on the grounds

NOTE by Gord D.: 1) NO (not so, a distortion of the 1970 PC Quebec document); 2) Why (hasn't it happened?) 3) But the working class is not being led by a class struggle, independentist leadership which challenges the PQ

that it was in agreement with the principle of the law, and did not want to support an "opposition movement" like the Front du Quebec Francais (FQF)! The PQ's conduct, and its positions, since its foundation are hardly better. The PQ and its leaders have stood opposed to almost every mass action in favor of national rights (St-Leonard, McGill Francais, July 1, Oct. 16, the June 24 celebration, etc.) just as it has opposed almost every workers strike, particularly that in the public serv^c. where the PQ leadership said it could very well soon be in the boss's place!

The PQ's national program is clearly incapable of freeing Quebec from the yoke of imperialism. The PQ does not even demand formal independence, leaving an ambiguity key questions such as the role of the Canadian army, monetary and tariff independence, etc. As for language rights, the PQ opposes a French Quebec, supporting the maintenance not only of McGill University, but of the English-language school system, and rejecting state intervention in the internal affairs of private enterprise to establish French as the language of work. As for the economy, the PQ program is less ambiguous: it would open the Quebec economy even more fully to foreign imperialism, particularly to American capital, even to the point of offering for sale 40 per cent of the stocks of Hydro-Quebec, a nationalized corporation! The PQ seems anxious to propose itself as a government which would "transform" Quebec from an internal colony of Canadian capitalism to a semi-colony at the service of U.S. imperialism.

As yet the PQ's attacks on the trade unions have not undercut its massive support among trade unionists. Its positions have been sufficiently different from those of other bourgeois parties to permit it to appear to workers as a "lesser evil" on union questions -- and support for the lesser evil among bourgeois parties remains the deeply rooted instinct in the Quebec labor movement. If the PQ's national program falls short of such basic demands as the establishment of an independent state and of French as the language of work and instruction, the vast majority of independentists accept its program as sufficient, or at least as a correct first step. The explosive contradictions of Quebec political life are capable, however, of throwing forth major confrontations in which substantial layers are alienated from the PQ in rapid order.

While the nationalist movement has grown steadily since its birth, the absence of genuine mass struggles of a nationalist character since October 1971 must be noted. Despite the indifference or opposition of the PQ to preceding mass actions, the left organizations like the LSO had been able to take advantage of important openings in the nationalist movement to influence and mobilize significant layers of the population, particularly in the student milieu. Even union leaders like Marcel Pepin have found themselves forced to endorse some of these actions (Oct. 16, 1971). But even they remained well below the level of the highpoints of previous years. For the moment the openings for socialists in the nationalist movement are reduced. The closing of two French-language schools in Montreal at the end of the last school year and the imminent closing of forty other French schools in Montreal in the next two years has not led to a generalized response. The campaign of the Front Populaire du Sud-Ouest of assemblies and occupations remained localized and fell apart quickly. This temporary

NOTE by Gord D.: as the PQ's class character becomes more revealed, it still gets more support from the workers; (absence of mass struggles is) due to absorption by the P.Q.; reason why we need an action program

lull in the nationalist movement, over about a year, can be explained in the main by four factors:

- a) Symbolic "concessions" of the government in the direction of a greater "nationalism" (withdrawal of Bill 28, the positions of cabinet ministers Castonguay, Cournoyer, L'Allier, etc. against the federal government, the promise of "amendments" to Bill 63, etc.)
- b) The holding of federal elections and provincial by-elections at the end of October, which creates illusions of the possibility of winning some national rights through the ballot. ?
- c) Reinforcement of the PQ's hegemony in the nationalist movement, ^{This is} and thus of its parliamentarist and reformist strategy, the absence ^{The 1st} of an independent policy of the union leadership, which can only help reason ^{the reason} the PQ control its members. ^{from which A+ b flow.}
- d) The government's offensive provoked major strike crises, like May, which have been followed by a certain pause for reflection flowing from the great strike movements of the spring.

However a study of the national oppression of the Quebecois confirms that this temporary lull is not due to any real change in their objective situation.

The Labor Movement

In the last two years Quebec has witnessed a rising wave of labor struggles marked by strikes of increased scope and militancy. This trend has highlighted the explosive character of the class struggle within the nation. A number of the most important strikes have been directed against the Quebec state, and against "national" bourgeois.

Labor's appearance in the centre stage of mass struggle has been accompanied by a marked politicization and radicalization of the union movement. This has been demonstrated by an increased nationalism among the unions, as reflected in their growing support of the struggle for the French language, for independence, and, in the absence of a class alternative, for the independent but bourgeois Parti Quebecois. ^(B) The most developed expression of this evolution of Quebec labor is found in the radical, anticapitalist declarations issued by each of the three union federations in the last year. ^{This reveals the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy.}

After suffering a considerable setback during the War Measures Crisis, the labor movement began to recover. The early months of 1971 saw a series of struggles break out, beginning with the teachers' struggle against declassification. These struggles culminated in the La Presse conflict which began on August 19, against the threat of job-slashing automation measures. In its antiunionism, Power Corporation enjoyed the support of the Drapeau and Bourassa administrations. With the support of Bourassa, the Drapeau regime banned any demonstrations near La Presse and then on October 29 ordered its cops to brutally assault the thousands of unionists who gathered in spite of the ban. One woman died during the cop assault. The strike was directed against the central daily of the nation; against its owners, the giant Power Corporation with its extensive holdings across the nation; the collusion of the two governments: all these factors gave this struggle a considerable social significance.

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. This is the first reason from which a) and b) flow
- B. This reveals the contradictory nature of the bureaucracy

The strike was marked by the establishment of an inter-union common front. This flowed logically out of the fact that unions of both the CSN and the FTQ were directly implicated in the struggle; nevertheless the front was extended to include the other union federation, the CEQ, and was concretized in a series of joint actions and public statements, the October 29 demonstration, and a giant rally.

The common front was a key achievement of the struggle. *Important to note when examining the nature of the trade union leadership.*

While the main demand of the La Presse workers was for job security, a number of their demands were of a more far-reaching character, posing aspects of workers control: veto power over the selection of the editor, and an end to censorship of journalists' articles.

The unions sought to mobilize mass support for their demands, and to show their own strength. They went ahead with the October 29 demonstration despite Drapeau's ban, and replied to the cop onslaught with the giant Forum rally of 12,000 people a few days later. One of the most important measures they took was the creation of Le Quotidien Populaire, the first Quebec daily paper ever to be published regularly by the unions. For two weeks, this paper told the truth about the workers' struggle at La Presse, cut through the anti-union bias of the boss dailies, and provided a source of news from the workers' viewpoint. Quebec workers have had for several years their own weekly, Quebec-Presse. But Le Quotidien Populaire, a regular daily, marked a qualitative extension of that accomplishment.

Their six-month militant, united struggle won the workers significant gains. All those fired by La Presse were re-hired, an indemnity of 5% of salary was won for the period of lock-out, and job security in the face of technological changes was achieved. Night shift typesetters won a 30-hour work week without loss of pay.

Nevertheless, the strike suffered from inadequate leadership. With a small group of workers arrayed against the giant Power Corporation, what was necessary to win was a broad mobilization of the labor movement, of its resources and of its membership, behind the strike. The labor leaders were not averse to moving out boldly on occasion, such as on October 29, when the power of massive mobilization was demonstrated. But the necessity of a strategy to extend and develop this force was also demonstrated; this the leadership failed to do. The Trotskyist Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière suggested the calling of a labor congress, in order to work out a concrete program of action to meet this need.

The union leaders also made a serious error when they decided to sink Le Quotidien Populaire after only two weeks of publication declaring that there had been a "new, positive turn" in the negotiations. (The strike lasted four months more.) For them, the daily was only a tactic to put some more pressure on the bosses. Of course, what else would one expect - a revolutionary consciousness?

By far the worst role was that played by the Parti Québécois, to whom most workers looked for at least verbal if not tangible support. The PQ equivocated, and at the decisive moment, when the cops were about to club the demonstration of thousands of workers, it unleashed a shrill attack on the unions. Typical of the PQ's attitude was René Levesque's declaration that he "would rather live in a South

NOTES by Gord D.

A. Important to note when examining the nature of the (Quebec) trade union leadership

B. Of course - what else would one expect? A revolutionary consciousness?

American banana republic than in a Quebec run according to the rantings¹⁰ of the union leaders.

The trade union leaders did not respond seriously to the PQ attacks.

The April Public Sector Strike

The increasing difficulties of the Quebec economy have led the national bourgeoisie and the Quebec state to try to make the workers pay for the crisis, to attempt to lower their standard of living. This factor lay behind the intransigence of the Quebec government towards the demands of the workers in public and para-public sectors (teachers, hospital workers, civil servants, etc.)

It was also determined to hold the line in order to set an example for the private sector, to keep wages of the public workers low, and thus to exert strong pressure against wage levels in the province. This would have its biggest impact on the less-advanced and service sectors of the economy, where the national bourgeoisie is concentrated.

This was a life and death struggle for the union movement. The whole membership of the CCO, half of the CSU, and a significant minority of the FTQ were involved. This fact, combined with the intransigence of the government, accounts for the bitter character of the conflict. The April strike, which lasted 11 days and involved a total of 210,000 workers and its extension in May, was the largest strike in Quebec or Canadian history. The strike was not "general" in the classical sense of the term, but it was nevertheless the first strike which united all those workers who are employed directly or indirectly by the government. The workers were able to overcome their traditional craft, rank or professional divisions. The strike involved many sectors that had been recently unionized: teachers, public workers, hospital workers, etc.; and young workers, many of them recently out of school, centers of nationalism and radicalism.

The unions advanced a series of common economic demands, principally for a wage increase of 2% over three years with a minimum wage of \$100 per week. But the unions had a strategy of maintaining a common front of a huge block of workers. The unions were taking on the state itself, their employer, which was thus unable to put on its accustomed mask of phoney "neutrality". They directly sought to alter the basic "incomes policy" elaborated by Quebec City and the strike paralyzed the operation of part of the state apparatus. The employer-government intervened to weaken the strike with injunctions; it finally resorted to an emergency law to bring the strike to an end. All these factors posed the strike as a major political confrontation.

The strike suffered a defeat when the emergency law 19 was passed and work resumed. The government with this law gave itself the right to decree a contract for its employees. Why did this defeat happen? From the beginning, the strike had displayed important weaknesses. The very breadth and importance of the strike, together with its social and political implications, broke against long-standing weaknesses of the Quebec labor movement: the great unevenness of trade-

union consciousness among different layers, the lack of long-standing traditions of united action, the absence of concepts of political action, and the overall inadequacies of the trade union leaderships.² These were highlighted in the strike in a number of ways:

a) The weakness in trade union consciousness among some important sectors of the class was shown in the defections from the Common Front of the 8,500 Hydro-Quebec workers, and later the 30,000 civil servants.

b) The expression of this weakness through the divisions existing right up into the top leadership of the union federations was dramatically demonstrated by the subsequent split of the majority of the CSN executive from the federation, and the establishment of the rival Confédération des Syndicats Démocratiques with a membership of some size, now standing at 30,000.

c) But the key weakness was the inability of the present union leadership to direct a struggle of that magnitude through to victory. The union heads treated the strike in a largely routine fashion, failing to make adequate preparations for it, or to educate the members as to what was involved: for example, the certainty of union-busting injunctions, and the likelihood of an emergency law. The union heads did not unite the strikers through common actions to deepen and strengthen their forces, nor did they inform them what was happening in the negotiations. They made no appeal for support to other sectors of Quebec society, such as the students or the workers in the private sector. Yet the potential for such support was explosively demonstrated when large numbers of private-sector workers spontaneously walked out in May. It was a political strike at least in its implications, which would be settled in the final analysis on the political level. Yet the leadership had no political strategy.

While completely supporting the April struggle, the LCO pointed out these weaknesses, and called for the reestablishment of a daily strike paper, for mass demonstrations and other actions designed to strengthen the strike and to win over public opinion. It also pointed to the absence of a political party able to give expression to the workers' demands.

The government first adopted a waiting stance, accompanied by heavy doses of lying propaganda about the suffering hospital patients, welfare recipients, etc. Then, singling out the hospital workers for particularly heavy attacks, it moved in with a series of punitive injunctions. Finally, it brought down its emergency law. The strikers, badly led and unprepared for this new situation, were forced to return to work.

If the Quebec government had been able to consolidate this victory, the labor movement would have been set back very seriously. But the government miscalculated, exaggerating the depth of the defeat. It proceeded to impose vindictive fines on the hospital unions, and fines and jail sentences on a large number of union leaders, who had defied the strike-breaking injunctions of April. Among class-conscious workers this touched off anger which reached flashpoint with the one-year jail sentence of the three leaders of the Common Front. The day they entered jail, workers began walking out across the nation. *But, it was the labor leaders who decided to go to jail. —they led this reaction.*

The May Events

About 100,000 Quebec workers went on strike over a period of 9 days, in a spontaneous explosion of anger and opposition to the government's assault on unionism. This was a national wildcat, all the more significant in that it occurred largely without leadership from the union officials, except for some instances and on a local level. Large numbers of workers from the private sector who had not moved in April, joined some public workers walking out for a second time. In comparison with April, the May strike displayed a much higher level of militancy, of self-organization, and of consciousness. It was, moreover, a directly political strike with non-economic goals: the freeing of the radio leaders and the withdrawal of the emergency law. Led by the union leaders.

With the entry of large numbers of industrial workers into struggle, key industries across Quebec were closed down, as were entire regions of the province. Indirectly reflecting the power of the strike, a split opened up in the Bourassa government, with the resignation of two key cabinet ministers. As a massive, spontaneous working class movement, May could not fail to give expression to the generalized anger of Quebec workers. "It catalysed their frustration and resentment at low wages, hopeless working conditions and national oppression," said Quebec-Press. This was often expressed through nationalism.

The movement reached extraordinary heights. In Sept-Iles, the workers closed the town completely; factories, mines, stores were all shut. The unions decided which stores would remain open. Barricades went up briefly on the only road into town, and the airport was closed for a time. The relation of forces was so favorable to the workers that the hundred-man local police force stayed out of sight. For a few days, the city was virtually in the hands of the unions. Daily mass strike meetings were held to decide the key questions. A daily strike paper was issued. The town council, virtually powerless, was forced to meet and pass pro-strike motions against its will. The radio was in the strike's hands. In that brief period of a few days, the Sept-Iles experience gave an indication of how dual-power situations develop and what some of their features can be.

Across the nation, one of the first moves of those walking out was to occupy the local radio or TV outlet, and begin presenting a true picture of the revolt and its causes over the airwaves. Over 12 stations were taken over. Through this action, the workers showed a keen understanding of the crucial role of up-to-date, truthful information in building the movement, of means of coordination, and of reaching and convincing the public, as well as a keen insight into the lying character of the boss-controlled media. The Montreal daily papers were closed down for a day in a gesture of sympathy with the strike.

Instances of self-management sprang up. At the Institut Albert-Prevost, the medical and support staff expelled the administration and began to operate the hospital themselves.

The extraordinary May struggle took place without any real leadership by the union heads. With the jailing of the three top leaders, the leadership remaining did not issue a single public instruction to the workers. The entire movement was left by rank and file militants. In part this reflected the disillusionment of conscious elements among the ranks with the abject failure of the official leadership's strategy in the April struggle. But the fundamental reason was that the union brass abdicated their leadership responsibilities. The fatal flaw in the May strike was the absence of coordination and of any plan of action.

The Bourassa government could again adopt a waiting strategy, while evicting the workers from the media they had occupied, and rushing police reinforcements into areas like Sept-Iles in order to reinforce the local repressive forces and thus alter the balance of forces in favor of the government. Revolutionary forces took heart and began to organize.

Without overall leadership, the strike eventually petered out. Nonetheless, the government was forced to make significant concessions. It bypassed the decree provisions of its April emergency law, reopened negotiations finally, granted job security and the \$100 minimum wage (by 1975).

It is essential to understand that the May events occurred within an oppressed nation, where the heightening financial pressures on the provincial government have led it to step up its attacks on the working class and its organisations. Class tensions within the nation have been heightened over the last period, precisely because of the national oppression of the Quebecois.

It would be wrong to call May a nationalist struggle, however. It was a struggle by the class to defend and improve its standard of living and to maintain its class organisations. The heights this struggle attained are a reflection of the militancy of the working class, which is in turn related to the double oppression of workers within the nation, and to the growing consciousness of this oppression and opposition to it, which is expressed through nationalism. It is in this sense that the very expressions of nationalism during May must be understood. Every mass movement of the Quebec workers of any substantial scope will have a nationalist flavor, for the advanced workers in Quebec are deeply nationalist.

From the beginning of the conflict, the PQ refused to come out unequivocally in support of the workers' demands. When the government moved to divide the workers and break the strike through the use of injunctions against the hospital workers, the PQ refused to speak out because "it didn't have all the facts". A few days later, the PQ proposed to the striking workers that they return to work and that a parliamentary commission be called to settle the conflict -- that is, to abandon the strike. Correctly, the workers turned a deaf ear to the PQ's appeal.

When the government brought in its "Loi-matraque" (police-club legislation), Bill 19, the PQ declared its agreement in principle. It posed its own amendment to the Bill which would have also removed

the workers' right to strike. Only when this amendment was defeated did the PQ vote against the Bill. But the F_C went wild when the workers began to walk out in May. F_C Leader Levesque accused the unions of "leading us to the brink of anarchy" and cautioned members not to take part in the movement. Robert Burns, ex-lawyer for the CGN, now a P.-MT, declared his disapproval with the unions' call ~~for~~ ^{however} for the granting of an amnesty to the imprisoned unionists, on the ~~basis~~ ^{of} grounds that it would "create a dangerous precedent."

The F_C made a pretense of opposing the government and favoring the workers during April, although a close examination of its statements reveals that it had only minor differences with the regime and was opposed to granting the workers' demands. When the May movement began to unfold, the PQ had to drop its pretenses, coming out strongly against the "anarchy" provoked by the unions.

In fact, the PQ's conduct demonstrates very clearly the correctness of the revolutionary socialists' characterization of it as a bourgeois party. It showed itself to be a party totally devoted "to order, to stability", in other words, devoted to the status quo, and the exploitation of the working class. In no sense did the PQ represent the unions, or defend them during the events; it was not responsible to them but to its bourgeois perspective. Levesque himself revealed the key to the PQ's thinking when he candidly declared that "of course, if you aren't blind you have to be sympathetic to the workers' cause in our society, but with respect to the civil servants conflicts you can't forget that the PQ will find itself in the role of the boss at the negotiation table when the next contract is to be signed and that it is necessary to 'strike a balance' between the workers' demands and the possibility of having the PQ in power at the time of those upcoming negotiations".

The strike movement of April-May, the largest working class struggle in Quebec history, was an experience that was rich in lessons, and will leave its imprint on the coming battles of the class. Above all else, it demonstrated the power and the revolutionary potential of the Quebec working class, its militancy and explosiveness. That astute spokesman of the Canadian bourgeoisie, the Toronto Globe & Mail was quick to recognize this danger when it declared in May: "While the past statements of the common front leaders have been alarming enough, the most disturbing feature of the present situation is the evidence it presents of how far their ideas and ideology have permeated the lower leadership and general membership of the unions in Quebec. The strikes and violence have been widespread and the numbers participating considerable. We are witnessing a new surge of a third political force in Quebec, one outside the normal political structure of government and opposition; one in fact dedicated to their destruction. The potential is extremely dangerous and it will have to be contained and disarmed by legitimate authority". (Emphasis added)

In fact, the May events did lay the basis for the emergence of the working class onto the political scene as an autonomous force leading other oppressed sectors in the nation in struggle against their oppressors, both foreign and "national". And by this fact, it posed the necessity of an independent political party of the working class.

The May struggle was the culmination of a long series of labor struggles often marked by the intervention of the Quebec government, and of increasingly frequent resort to emergency strike-breaking legislation. In turn, it concretized and gave additional meaning to the radical anticapitalist documents now under discussion in the three union federations.

The Union Leaderships

In the period leading up to the April strike, the union federations all produced radical "manifestos" which analyze the situation of the unions and propose a new strategy. A common thread runs through the three documents: the limits of the "business unionism" they have been practising; the necessity of the unions broadening their struggle, of fighting the real enemy, the capitalist system and the state which defends and promotes it. Both the CSN and the FTQ call for a socialist society. *This gives them a far different character from the English Canadian unions.*

The CSN document presents an analysis of how capitalism deforms the Quebec economy. The provincial government is dominated by the foreign monopolies, it asserts. Put the real question is whether or not the workers want to live under a capitalist system. The CSN declaration comes out for socialism, for the nationalization of the major sectors of the economy and its management by the democratic decision-making of the workers.

The FTQ document concludes that both Ottawa and Quebec City are agents of the capitalists, that the Quebec state is the mechanism of the exploitation of the Quebecois. The workers are not fighting to replace a set of English capitalists with their French counterparts, for in the age of imperialism this would change little. Rather, it says, it is necessary to revise the traditional union strategy and to start to fight the system, to crush it and replace it and the "liberal state" that supports it.

In 1971, a document published for the CEQ convention declared that the teacher was a wage earner like other workers, and that the CEQ had to become part of the Quebec workers' movement. This projection was realized in the actions during 1972. The document also projected the possibility of keeping the schools open during strikes, and using them as meeting places where teachers can discuss common problems with other workers: an idea which resembles the revolutionaries' concept of the Red University. It also projected the need for a new society where the means of production and the wealth produced are in the hands of the people. In its 1972 declaration, the CEQ presents an excellent analysis of how the school system serves the capitalist class. This system is a reproduction, the image of capitalist society, it says, reproducing social classes and transmitting bourgeois ideology. Teachers must struggle against the capitalist system, and they can best do this by uniting with their fellow workers through a struggle against their common enemy. The CEQ declaration winds up with a series of suggestions for concrete struggle in the school for basic democratic rights, projecting the idea of student-teacher-support staff-parent control of education.

The appearance of these documents in all three centrales is a stunning demonstration that the struggle of the workers in defense

of their own interests leads them to challenge the system that underlies their exploitation. As one of the most pervasive forms of the exploitation of the Quebecois workers is national oppression; this challenge assumes nationalist expressions. That is why the same conventions which discussed these radical anticapitalist declarations witnessed a strong surge of nationalism. The FTQ congress of Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 1971 threw out the anti-separatist resolution traditionally adopted at previous congresses, and adopted in its place a strong statement on Quebec's right to self-determination including its right to sovereignty. It also reaffirmed the FTQ's already established support for the French language as sole official language of Quebec and the language of work.

A month following the May 1972 uprising, the CSN met in convention, and heard a report by the "Committee of Twelve", a group of CSN leaders charged to work out proposals on political and social strategy. Noting that the CSN had been on record for Quebec self-determination since 1966, the "Twelve" recommended that it take "a firmer position on the important question of Quebec's independence". If their report supported independence only implicitly, support was explicit in a motion presented by the Montreal CSN Central Council and in several other motions. Later that month, the CEO, at its June 26-30 congress, became the first congress to take a stand for independence, though the position will become official CTQ policy only following a referendum vote of the membership. In addition, the CFEQ reaffirmed support for French as sole official language of Quebec, for withdrawal of Bill 63, and renewed its membership in the Mouvement pour un Quebec Francais.

The documents of the centrales thus reflect the impact of the evolution of the trade union struggles, as well as the overall national oppression of the Quebecois, which have not only sharpened class antagonisms in Quebec but imprinted union struggles with nationalist views, and nationalist demands. *And especially among teachers who are most involved in the language question & with students; therefore student radicalism is main possibility for mass actions.* Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out some important weaknesses in the documents. The central weakness lies in their abstract character. They fail (except for the FTQ) to present any concrete series of demands around which struggles could be developed and which could educate workers and others to the nature of the tasks which the documents speak of. Thus the anticapitalist sentiments expressed in the documents cannot be concretized, nor can their necessity and relevance be demonstrated to others. They remain pure wish. It is significant that the main concrete proposal made at the CFT and CTQ conventions, the establishment of Corité's popular, has not been implemented to date.

The documents, while drawing far-reaching political conclusions, do not advance the necessary instrument for their realization, a mass independent political party of labor. They carefully avoid attacking the PQ. The CSN exposes the "traditional parties". The FTQ says that it will build a workers' party if no Quebec party is willing to commit itself to the workers' interests. The CFEQ avoids mentioning all political parties. This amounts, on the part of all three, to a tacit backing of the PQ. Yet the entire experience of the unions serve to show the treacherous character of the PQ; the union documents themselves stand in complete contradiction with the PQ's consciously

capitalist program. Rather than being inconclusive to date, as the FTQ suggests, labor's experience with the PQ shows the necessity of a labor party.

The documents seem to abstract the workers' struggle for socialism from the struggle for national liberation. They do not raise the question of language exploitation, of independence, or any other major nationalist issue. One can hardly say that these are not issues in the labor movement, for the same conventions that discussed the documents registered a strong surge of nationalism. Perhaps the authors of the documents considered it unnecessary to raise these issues, holding that they were already being raised by the PQ and the nationalists. But this approach abandons leadership of the national question to bourgeois, anti-labor forces, and ignores the fact that it is impossible to have a strategy for profound social change in Quebec which ignores these questions. In the final analysis the absence of the national question is another proof of the abstractness of the documents.

A misconception is also present on the nature of the capitalist state. The FTQ text in particular projects the idea that it has been "won over" by big business, implying by that that it could be used to build a socialist society. But in fact the bourgeois state has always served the interests of the capitalist class. A workers and farmers government cannot rest content until all its basic institutions have been dismantled and replaced by new institutions based on organs of workers' control.

Revolutionary socialists are at the appearance of these documents as a major step forward for the labor movement. They pose many of the conclusions which flow logically out of the struggle of Quebec labor in the last period, and point to a socialist transformation of society. Revolutionary socialists intervene in the wide-ranging discussion that the documents' publication has opened up in the union movement, in order to present their viewpoint, and to pose the tasks for labor in the next period.

But it is necessary to have a rounded understanding of the real significance of the discussion that is now opening. The Quebec labor movement is marked by both a very high level of militancy and combativity, and at the same time, a relatively low level of understanding. This is manifested in the frequency and explosiveness of struggles, but also in their lack of a sustained character and the workers' propensity to lapse into passivity for a period as these struggles come to a close. This highlights the importance of a correct leadership able to accurately gauge the nature of the struggle, to derive correct tactics, and to educate the membership. While the union documents represent a new stage in the thinking of a limited layer of the advanced militants in secondary-leadership positions, they are far from the preoccupations of most of the rank and file. The very abstractness of the documents shows their preliminary character; a rounded program would offer a plan of struggle linked to the concrete experiences and the concerns of the ranks. The documents do not represent the official positions of the federations; they have been distributed and discussed among a small fraction of the memberships during a certain period. Yet they have served to open up the discussion

of radical political views in the unions, and to legitimize anti-capitalist and socialist concepts in the eyes of a significant minority of union members.

Following May, the labor movement has been faced with a number of major difficulties. There have been strains within both the FIO and CQ, but it has been the CGT that has suffered the most serious blows, losing about 60,000 of its 210,000 members to more backward formations disinclined to go along with the trend to union unity and politicization. There has been a notable quiescence of labor struggles since May. This is attributable to a number of factors: the uneven level of consciousness of the class; the fact that May was not a decisive victory for the unions; the inadequacy of the union leadership; and the general necessity after a dramatic struggle for workers to pause, reaccumulate resources, and to think out the lessons of the previous experience.

Other Movements

The struggles of the labor and nationalist movements have stimulated other Quebecois, who have been also encouraged by the rise of struggles by their counterparts around the world. Layers of society have moved out in defense of their own needs: women, students, native Indians, Eskimos, and any people. Struggles have arisen against the war in Vietnam, against pollution, failing to meet housing needs, etc.

The last few years have been marked by the clearly discernible increased awareness of women of their particular oppression, and of a rising determination to fight it. Women's liberation literature is now being published and receiving a wide distribution; teach-ins and study courses on women's problems have grown up. The media, responding to this sentiment, have published many articles on women's problems and women's liberation. There have been a number of actions by women, and discussion circles formed, as well as a few organized groups.

A significant action was the occupation by a group of women of jury seats in the courtroom following the powerful denunciation by Lise Bâcher of the legal system's discrimination against women. This led the government to quickly change the law. Although the government had responded to initial pressure and created a new category of taverns ("brasseries") which women were allowed to enter, the delays in applying the law led a group of women to defy the law and invade some taverns to point out the real situation. Shortly thereafter many more "brasseries" appeared.

The only issue around which a sustained campaign has been able to be built, with concrete actions, has been the right to abortion. The generalized women's liberation groups founded earlier have generally stagnated or fallen apart, to be succeeded by small discussion groups or the abortion coalitions. The coalitions remain numerically small, but they have been able to tap an obvious sentiment and lead a series of important actions. This evolution in Quebec follows a general pattern in the Canadian women's liberation movement, which has been analysed in our 1972 draft resolution on women's liberation. The largest action for abortion in Quebec occurred in November 1971 when 400-500 persons marched demanding repeal of the law. Everything

indicates that the great importance of the abortion issue for the women's liberation movement in Quebec will continue.

Women played a significant role in the April-May strikes. A majority of those earning under \$100 were women, and the government sought to use this fact to justify the low wages. Some of the most important sectors of the strike, and the most militant, were ones with a heavy proportion of women workers, such as the schools and the hospitals. While this did not make the strike a feminist strike, there were definite signs that women were conscious of the stake they had in the strike as women.

Women have already had some impact with their struggle. They have won some victories against the government. While these are small, they do offer an indication of what possibilities lie ahead. So far, only a small part of the sentiment for women's liberation has been tapped. The potential is enormous but it must be given voice and directed towards concrete struggles.

Contrary to the predictions of certain sectarians, women have not stopped struggling as other layers have entered into action. There is no reason to believe that they will not continue their fight as women, or that it will not mushroom as the nationalist, labor and student movement surge forward. Just the opposite: everything indicates that we have seen only the beginnings of what will become a truly massive struggle of women for their rights.

The year 1968 marked the high point of the Quebec student movement, a point which has yet to be surpassed. The student movement began to recover after the heavy blow of the War Measures Act. It responded very early to the movement against the repression, and remained throughout a key component of that fight. Then it moved forward in defense of the teachers in their struggle against the government's attempt to declassify them, leading in several cases to important conflicts between the students and the administration of their schools. By the fall of 1971, there were support movements for union struggles at both French language universities in Montreal; but the biggest student response came in support of the struggle led by the FCDLF in defense of the French language.

The militant struggle of students against the government-imposed norm of 82 days following the April 1972 public sector strike combined with and paralleled student solidarity actions for the public sector workers. The schools tended to be the strongest points of resistance to Law 19, both because of the militancy of the teachers and the active student support. By the fall of 1972, there were a number of student actions around a number of specifically student issues: the Bar examinations for law students; the firing of certain professors; and, what threatened to be the biggest student struggle over the last period, until the government was forced to pull back, the imposition of the "regime pedagogique". There has been a marked tendency to attempt to reintroduce coordination among the students, that was shattered following the 1968 movement, with the current growth of the Federation des Etudiants du Quebec, which now seems to have established real links with student militants around the regime pedagogique fight.

A number of points are clear: student issues have not been "bypassed", but continue to lead to important struggles; students are responsive to general political struggles within the nation; they can respond more quickly than other sectors; in fact they tend to bounce back from defeats or obstacles more quickly than others. This movement, with its dynamism and spirit of struggle, its openness to all ideas, offers revolutionary socialists unique opportunities for intervention in order both to advance the struggle, and to build revolutionary cadres. *Verdict of Theory of Worldwide Youth Rev.*

The Crisis of Leadership

The main reason for the weakness of the April-May strike movement is to be found in the inadequacy of the official union leadership and its absence of a strategy for the struggle. The trade union leadership has refused over the years to create a political arm launching a political party responsible to the labor movement, and even when it came up against the government in a decisive confrontation made no move in this direction. Rather it endorses the bourgeois PQ. Of course it does this in part because of the pressure of the pro-PQ sentiment of the membership, but the union leadership is largely responsible for the massive support given by workers to the PQ through their actions, their failure to criticize the PQ and their refusal to build a working class political alternative.

On the level of the national struggle, the union leadership has abdicated its responsibility of formulating an independent policy by accepting and reinforcing this support to the PQ, a party incapable of breaking with foreign imperialism and thus eliminating the source of national oppression.

Aside from its conciliating and severely limited national program the PQ's hostility to the working class, to its demands, its struggles and even its leaders, confirms its bourgeois character. Its essential role is to promote bourgeois ideology in the nationalist movement to derail it from a class struggle perspective. The PQ denounces Quebec's oppression by English Canada not because it opposes oppression or privileges, but because it seeks to gain more privileges for a small layer of Quebecois. The PQ appeals for "national unity" of all Quebecois, refusing to recognize the fundamental contradictions between the various classes within the nation, as well as the domination of Quebec's economy by U.S. and English-Canadian capital. The PQ seeks to suppress the real roots of Quebec's national oppression in class oppression and in capitalism as a world system. In the name of this "national unity" the PQ demands that the workers of Quebec forget their own class interests, particularly vis-a-vis a future PQ government, in order to follow the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie which have always betrayed the interests of the nation in order to benefit from its alliance with imperialism.

As a party loyal to the maintenance of capitalism, the PQ is unable to liberate the Quebec nation and to achieve the national tasks, because it is capitalism itself as a world system which imposes on Quebec the status of oppressed nation.

This national oppression cannot be eliminated without getting rid of the system which produces it.

The PQ is a bourgeois nationalist party, bourgeois first and only then nationalist, in the sense that "rights" of the imperialist corporations always take priority over the national rights of the Quebecois in the same way as the "acquired rights" of the English-speaking minority have priority over the legitimate linguistic rights of the oppressed majority.

Everything indicates that the top leaders of Quebec's unions are bureaucrats, with all that this implies. They aim to preserve their privileged positions at the head of the workers movement. This does not mean that they are unable to undertake militant actions from time to time. On the contrary, since the bureaucrats' privileges rest on the existence of the unions, they are forced to act in defense of the unions when they are menaced. They cannot allow themselves too insensitive to pressures from the ranks either, since that is where the dues come from. At the same time, they are "representatives" charged with negotiating "agreements" with the bosses and with the state to ensure the bourgeoisie a certain degree of "social peace". The social function of the bureaucracy is to seek to establish the most favorable equilibrium for the working class within the capitalist system.

even though they denounce capitalism & talk about the need for destroying cap. & replacing it with a socialist state.

(A) The workers upsurge of the spring of 1972 showed the trade union leadership's capacity to take militant actions. It headed up the massive challenge of the public service workers, and then by its act of defiance sparked the May wave of wildcat strikes. Yet the union leadership lacked any program or strategy to lead these actions to victory. These experiences re-confirm its fundamentally bureaucratic character, its pro-capitalist, reformist perspective, which aims at winning reforms and concessions within the capitalist framework.

... according to this logic, they are no different from any other union bureaucracy → this contradicts pp.24

(B) Hemmed in at present by the rigid refusal of the ruling class to grant even minimal concessions, and by the difficulty of making meaningful gains even with the reformist's modest criteria, this leadership is capable of radical actions and grand gestures, ranging from its defiance in May to its sponsorship of the federations' anti-capitalist manifestos of the past year-- which while not written by the top union leadership, bear their stamp, combining radical rhetoric with an absence of program or concrete perspectives for struggle. These phenomena do not constitute for the union leadership part of a strategy for socialism, but rather gestures and maneuvers aimed at increasing their bargaining power, alarming the ruling class, and thus winning greater concessions.

There is a clear difference between the Quebec union bureaucracy's orientation and that of its counterparts in English Canada or the United States. This was explained in the 1968 LSA/LSO resolution on Quebec in these terms: "Many fundamental criticisms must be made of the policies of the union leaderships, but we must recognize that the Quebec union leadership, while it varies in character according to the union in question, plays on the whole a more positive role than elsewhere in Canada - more energetic, more open to rank and

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. even though they denounce capitalism & talk about the need for destroying capitalism & replacing it with a socialist state
- B. therefore, according to this logic, they are no different from any other union bureaucracy; this contradicts pp.24-25; (are they pro-capitalist?)

file pressure, less mired in bureaucratic privilege and bureaucratic methods of operation. It has repeatedly opened the door to militant and effective class action on the trade union level." (p.18)

This difference does not flow from the Quebec union leadership's being of a different social character, but rather from the specific situation that the Quebec unions and working class find themselves in. First they are in an oppressed nation where class antagonisms are very strained and where super-profits capable of facilitating the establishment of an "entente" with the leaders of the working class are being drained out of the nation. A second factor is the relative youth of the Quebec union movement, the specific weight of new sectors (teachers, public servants, etc.), the nationalism of the young unionists, etc. *This is a decisive difference for the Quebec t.u.c.*

But if Trotskyists have in the past emphasized this difference in the actions of the bureaucrats in Quebec and elsewhere, and correctly so, it is even more important now to emphasize the fundamentally bureaucratic character of the official leadership of the unions in Quebec. In the decisive conflicts they have clearly shown their inability to lead, and the necessity of building a new leadership, *to lead around a class struggle strategy and through a series of internal* *conflicts with the present leadership.*

Building the Revolutionary Party

*mean in terms of
struggles & program?*

Overcoming the Crisis

Economic chaos, growing unemployment, malicization and destruction of the culture, suppression of national and democratic rights, pollution, war, sexual oppression and alienation: these are the products of the decay of capitalism, of a system based on exploitation and on the deformation of all human relationships. The only solution to this crisis is the elimination of capitalism by a revolutionary transformation from top to bottom which would expel foreign imperialism, which would nationalize the means of production and natural resources, which would install economic planning at the national level and which would establish a workers state, thus creating the indispensable preconditions to the abolition of every form of oppression.

Only the Quebec working class, because of its strategic role in the economy, its power and its interests, is capable of accomplishing this task. Only the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, is capable of leading such a revolution and overthrowing the exploiting classes and their state apparatus. The struggles of the Quebec working class, especially during the April-May 1972 strikes, show that it possesses this power and revolutionary capacity. These strikes were the unchallengeable expression of the instinctive aspiration of Quebec workers to rise to the level of the tasks imposed by history.

The explosive militancy and the nationalism of Quebec workers give evidence of their deep, combative spirit. But the working class is not yet conscious of its historic interests, and of the

irreducible opposition of its interests to the entire existing social and political order. They do not yet understand that national oppression, the oppression of women, the oppression of youth and the economic wrongs flow from class oppression, that is, the domination of one class through its state over the other exploited classes.

This political consciousness is born of the contradictions of capitalism and from the class struggle (whether it take the form of economic, national or feminist struggles or other forms), but this consciousness does not develop spontaneously or automatically. Quebec workers have a trade union consciousness and national consciousness which is steadily growing, but is still embryonic, aside from a still weak, isolated and confused vanguard layer. The high level of militancy and nationalist anger is combined with a low level of political consciousness, which corresponds to the two factors which determine the masses' orientation, the objective conditions of capitalism on the one hand, and the nature of the workers' leadership on the other. Given the deepening of the crisis of capitalism, the decisive factor is the character of the leadership of the working class.

The present leadership of the Quebec working class is not capable of offering the leadership required, because of its reformist outlook. This is the lesson of the big struggles of 1972. While the nature of the working class leadership reflects the level of the class's political consciousness, it is also true that this same leadership perpetuates this consciousness, instead of raising it to the level of the tasks established by the crisis of capitalism, as a leadership worthy of the name must do.

(A) ~~of an objective character for subjective crisis i.e. privilege & class peace (do these exist?)~~
The crisis of capitalism in Quebec can thus be summed up as ~~exist?~~ the crisis of leadership of the working class, the gap which exists between the present level of consciousness of wide layers of the class and the socialist consciousness required to seize state power and to carry through the revolutionary transformation which alone can advance social progress in Quebec and the world.

It is in the struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation as it unfolds concretely that the incapacity of the present leadership must be exposed, and the working class must be given a correct, Trotskyist, leadership, capable of overcoming this contradiction between the maturity of the objective conditions for revolution and the lack of maturity of the forces which must carry it through. The key tool in this process is the transitional program.

The Transitional Program

(B) ~~stages in uneven, combined development producing genuine differences such as union leadership~~

In the period since 1968, the masses have repeatedly intervened in the decision-making process in the nation, with powerful movements of protest which have unfolded in the streets, breaking through the normal framework of tranquil parliamentary debate. Above all, this has been true of the nationalist movement, most notably in struggles to defend the French language; but students, labor, and other forces have also mobilized in defense of their interests.

NOTES by Gerd D.

- A. dialectic of reformism - material basis of an objective character for a subjective crisis, i.e., privilege and class peace (do these exist?); this exposure theory sounds sectarian, because leadership has revolutionary potential (with)in it.
- B. Coupled a recognition of process and development; distinguishing stages in uneven and combined development producing genuine differences such as union leadership in (an) "internal colony"

This propensity for independent mass action is one of the most promising features of Quebec politics today. It is only through the mobilization of the power of the masses that the ruling class can be forced to make substantial concessions. The May 1972 events prove this clearly. Revolutionary socialists strive to propagandize this concept broadly, and thus to inspire the masses to further struggles. At the same time, socialists have a fundamental orientation to independent mass action because they understand that only through their own experiences, their own struggles can the Quebecois be convinced of the necessity of a struggle against the capitalist system as a whole, for a socialist society. Struggle is the school of the masses. Part of this necessary education is the exposure of the old established leaderships of the masses and the demonstration of the necessity of new, revolutionary leadership.

This sounds very banal for document.
Revolutionaries support all struggles of the oppressed to better their conditions, no matter how small the issue. In this process, they advance a series of transitional and democratic demands which can "help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find (A) the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution." Such a program bases itself on the concrete, objective tasks which are posed; it seeks to formulate a set of demands which take into account the current concerns and struggles of the masses in order to lead them to understand, on the basis of their own experience in struggle, the necessity of overturning the system and of constructing a new revolutionary leadership. *Does this also mean that it is hopeless to expect anything else to emerge from the masses?*

This method of the Transitional Program, the programmatic method of the Fourth International, has particular relevance to the current situation in Quebec which is characterized by a high degree of combativity on the part of the oppressed masses, a propensity to mass independent mobilizations in the streets, on the one hand, and a low level of understanding, a widespread acceptance of the totally inadequate programs and leadership of the trade union bureaucrats and the bourgeois PO, on the other. Revolutionaries can overcome this contradiction by means of the correct application of the method of the Transitional Program.

Revolutionaries do not leave the leadership of everyday struggles in the hands of the misleaders who hope to contain the power of the masses and to lead it in safe legalistic and parliamentary directions. They fight to direct them towards proletarian methods of struggle, such as mass extraparliamentary mobilizations independent of the bourgeois parties.

The leadership role played by the LSO in the struggle for a French Quebec in the last period offers a model application of this strategy.

1. we need an action program.
A transitional program for Quebec cannot be arbitrarily invented, but must flow out of the experience of the nation and of the worldwide working class. Given the smallness of their forces, the Trotskyists in Quebec are not able to predict in advance around what issues massive struggles will break out. They must remain alert to openings and find ways to intervene using the basic method of the Transitional Program. Nevertheless, a number of concepts and demands

(B)

sounds like a formula — you plug in your program as an interface to the masses!

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. This sounds very banal for a document; does this also mean that it is hopeless to expect revolutionary elements to emerge from the trade union leaderships?
- B. Therefore we need an action program for Quebec; sounds like a formula — you plug in an item into your program as an interface to the masses!

have emerged which will be essential components of such a program for Quebec.

Action Program for Quebec

In the course of its development and increased experience, the LSO tries to elaborate an action program for Quebec, a program that applies the method of the Transitional Program to the particular objective conditions of Quebec, to the concrete needs of the masses and to the struggle of the oppressed as it unfolds today. Taking as its starting point the objective needs of the oppressed of Quebec, the program must combine the themes and demands which have already been raised in the struggle, with those which are necessary to advance and to generalize the struggle, and to deepen the level of consciousness of the masses in the direction of an overall understanding of the solution to the Quebec crisis.

It is not a matter of working out a complete program for the building of a socialist society, but of putting forward a series of partial, democratic and transitional demands which can lead workers and the oppressed masses towards the socialist revolution, a series of demands which can mobilize the masses in struggle and lead to victories, thus encouraging the confidence of the oppressed and laying the basis for coming, broader struggles.

Already, two elements of the action program present themselves as essential components.

For an Independent Quebec

The aim of the current national struggle against the domination of imperialism, as it is expressed in the nationalist movement today, is summed up in the slogan: "For an Independent and French Quebec!" Within the framework of unconditional support of the national struggle of an oppressed people, Trotskyists must identify with this slogan and incorporate it in their action program, while also formulating demands which give this slogan a concrete, broader content, expressing all the means necessary to a full abolition of national oppression. *What is this program?*

For revolutionary socialists, it is a fundamental principle to defend the right of self-determination for all oppressed nations. Since the key sectors of the Quebec nation have come to massively support independence, the demand for an independent Quebec has become the concrete manifestation of this general right. The Trotskyists therefore advocate an independent Quebec.

Our support of national demands like independence is not conditional on their being explicitly linked to socialist demands, or on their having a so-called "explicit class character." We support such demands as expressions of the national struggle against imperialist domination, and as necessary components of the revolutionary socialist program.

Within the framework of this full support of independentism, we advance a program which offers concrete solutions to the immediate problems posed by national oppression, linking them to a perspective of a radical and full transformation of that society. We seek to integrate the just

demands of the nationalist movement into the overall socialist program for national liberation.

For a Labor Party

If the partial demands contained in the program can be won from the oppressors through struggle, the overall program cannot be won without an anti-capitalist revolution and without the seizure of state power by the working class at the head of all the oppressed. That is the only durable solution to the problems of all the oppressed.

In order to prepare the working class for its historic role of emancipator of all the oppressed, it must take on an independent political existence by breaking with the bourgeoisie and its parties and creating its own political party. For the fact that wide layers of workers perhaps believe themselves to be in "their own party" when they join the bourgeois PQ does not in any way change the objective necessity of the working class' following an independent policy, not only in order to win their most immediate economic demands, but also to advance the national emancipation struggle of the Quebecois people as a whole.

If the workers do not understand the necessity of creating their own class party, if their mentality is backward, the political task of Trotskyists is to utilize the action program to teach the workers about that objective necessity, and not to adapt the program to the backward mentality. To transform the concept of independent political action into a living historical reality, it is necessary to formulate it in the program, beginning with the concrete existence, the experiences and the aspirations of the masses.

As was explained in the statement on the labor party adopted by the September 1972 plenum (Discussion Bulletin no. 12), and whose line is incorporated in this resolution, there is no revolutionary party in Quebec at present that has wide influence among the laboring masses. No mass political party of the working class has been established throughout Quebec's history. The unions, economic defense organizations, are the only forms of mass working class expression. In the light of these considerations, independent class political action can only become real in Quebec at the present time through the demand for a mass labor party launched by the unions.

The formulation "labor party" spells out what is fundamental -- its class character -- leaving open the question of program. But it goes without saying that the LSO will do everything it can to have the labor party adopt a revolutionary transitional program of the kind outlined above. The LSO does not accept the idea that the labor party will necessarily be a reformist party.

The 1970 resolution explained that "as for the NDP, the developments since 1968 have put a serious question mark over its future in Quebec." (pages 11 - 12). While this question mark has not been removed, the NDP continues as a political tendency within the Quebec working class movement. In its federal election campaigns it has posed a working class alternative to the bourgeois parties -- particularly because of its organic connection with the labor party in English Canada. A high NDP vote would be a positive step in moving towards the establishment of a labor party in Quebec. Revolutionary socialists have called on this basis for support to the NDP in federal elections.

The United Front

To exert maximum pressure, it is necessary that struggles be organized around a set of clear, unambiguous demands which can win the widest possible support. It is also crucial to insist on the principle of non-exclusion. All those who support the aims of the struggle are welcome to participate fully in the movement. At present in Quebec, the revolutionary tendency does not have hegemony or even less influence. The PQ refuses to call mass actions. Most battles break out suddenly, and often spontaneously. Under these circumstances only the establishment of united fronts (fronts communs) offers the possibility of involving the largest number of forces possible in action around a common goal.

This approach has already shown its indispensability in an important number of Quebec struggles, notably in the coordinating committee of the FOF (Front du Quebec francais) that impelled most of the struggle against Bill 63 in 1969, and again in the Front Commun pour la Defense de la Langue Francaise in 1971-72.

United fronts must be open to all those who agree with their program, with their basis of unity. Attempts to exclude forces on the grounds of their "bourgeois" or "non-working class" character weaken the unity and striking force of a united action. They can provide a precedent that is quickly used to exclude militant or revolutionary forces who are not to the liking of the initiators of a united action. There is no breach of principle in admitting non-proletarian or even bourgeois forces to a united front. The basic principle is that of independent mass action -- that is, action independent of the bourgeoisie and its institutions, action which does not limit itself to traditional bourgeois channels but proceeds through autonomous forms of action: mass action, not individual action; in the streets not in the parliamentary chamber. If bourgeois elements such as the Parti Quebecois or its representatives are to come into a united front, however, their participation must not be on the basis of limits or conditions on program or forms of action; it must not compromise the independence of a united front, including its independence of the PQ. Revolutionaries must, as always, retain their freedom of criticism, their freedom to advance their own program.

It is unprincipled for socialists to unit with bourgeois forces in an electoral coalition or in a coalition for governmental power. Such formations, called popular fronts, will tend to elaborate a full governmental program, which must go beyond the limits of capitalist property relations imposed by the bourgeois coalition partners. They therefore propose a specific variant of a capitalist government. But united fronts are coalitions for action, for mass struggle, to attain a specific demand or series of demands. What are key to them are the demands and the methods of struggle they utilize. If these are correct, then coalitions based on them will prove to be essential tools for the working class, the independentists, etc., to attain their goals.

The united front approach is essential if the masses are to be won away from the PQ. The PQ cannot be exposed for what it is either by capitulating to it, by joining it or by keeping silent on its betrayals. Nor can it be exposed if socialists attempt to pretend it does not exist, or try to avoid it -- for that is only another form of capitulating to it. Those who understand the true nature of the PQ must seek occasions to

confront it, and to effectively expose it as the enemy of the nationalist and labor movements. -- The LSC has correctly, in the past, demanded of the PQ that it participate in the mass campaigns, such as in defense of the French language. On the rare occasions when PQ leaders have responded and identified with specific struggles, this has greatly strengthened the power of such struggles. On many other occasions, the PQ's refusal to have anything to do with the fight has been a salutary experience for many militants with illusions about the party.

In order, however, to be able to effectively expose the PQ, and even to effectively place demands on it, it is obligatory for socialists to remain outside the PQ, and to guard their political independence. There must be no confusion as to whether or not they support this bourgeois party. The past years have shown that those who "entered" the PQ in order to expose it from within, or to build a militant left-wing opposition, have been unable to do so. They have instead reinforced the PQ's hegemony.

Quebec trade union federations have moved forward since 1970 towards participation in united front action for national goals. The Federations' participation in the Mouvement Québecois is a positive step, though the MQF has not organized mass actions. The unions were key in organizing the 1972 St-Jean-Baptiste day celebrations. Segments of the trade union movement, and individual leaders, have been identified with or sponsored individual actions. The winning of support from the trade union movement -- organizations or individual leaders -- is a key aspect of the building of united front actions, which can help pose political challenges before the union leadership, and open the door to the involvement of larger layers of the rank-and-file.

The National Struggle

Within an oppressed nation such as Quebec where the national question has always occupied a central position in political life, it is of the utmost importance for Trotskyists to participate fully in the nationalist movement on the basis of their program.

In doing this, the Trotskyist program will come up against the opposition of two well-defined tendencies: in the Left, two tendencies which may seem to be contradictory, but which actually complement each other. Independently of the aims expressed, the result of the policies of these two tendencies is both a reinforcement of bourgeois forces and a betrayal of the national struggle and the struggle for socialism.

"Socialists" like Vallières and "left" union leaders have openly capitulated to the bourgeois PQ under the pretext that it is necessary to unite all social classes in Quebec within a single party capable of winning the "first stage", which is independence, a stage isolated from the class struggle and the struggle for socialism. They ignore the social content of the struggle for national liberation, the fact that the class struggle is indeed the driving force of the national struggle, the force upon which depends the struggle for national rights against the imperialist system.

In the epoch of imperialism, a national liberation struggle can only be genuinely solved by means of a mass struggle led by the working class as an independent political force, resulting in the establishment of a

workers' state; a state which, at the same time as it expels imperialism proceeds by the force of necessity to break up capitalist property relations within the nation. Instead of preparing the Quebecois working class for this indispensable vanguard role during the national struggle, the support that these "socialists" give to a bourgeois party can only disarm the workers and drag them into the mire of class collaboration and into a state of dependence upon the bourgeoisie which will smother for a whole period the revolutionary capacity of the working class and thus contribute to the betrayal of the national struggle.

The program of the Trotskyists within the nationalist movement must warn militants against the railings of the P^C, and must clearly show the close ties between the national struggle and the class struggle, as well as the necessity for independent political organisation of the working class. It must also warn the nationalistic movement against the parliamentary reformism of the P^C by which it tries to "wrench away" our "liberation" by means of a bourgeois policy reducing the oppressed Quebecois masses to the role of spectators. The program must explain the necessity of mass actions independent of the P^C and any other bourgeois party.

The other tendency in the left, composed among others of the group headed by Charles Gagnon and the Group Marxiste Révolutionnaire (GMR) seems to believe that the national struggle has been bypassed; in fact, that it has nothing to do with the class struggle; they prefer to dodge the key political question of how socialists see the question of the abolition of national oppression. They explain their total silence on this question by repeating that under capitalism it is "impossible to win national rights", and that the socialist revolution will solve all that!

~~REXT~~

This is a concept which is absurd from the theoretical point of view, and sectarian from the point of view of practical politics. These people understand nothing about the significance of the struggle for democratic demands in general, and national demands in particular.

Socialism in itself is impossible without national liberation, in the sense that the working class cannot lead the socialist revolution if it does not prepare itself for it, by struggling for national rights. Furthermore, the victory of the socialist revolution cannot be maintained and cannot lead humanity towards its victory over the state before the process of national liberation has been won. It is also necessary for the working class to take the lead in the leadership of the nationalist movement in order to create an alliance of all oppressed sectors under its leadership.

It is not sufficient to say, "The socialist revolution will solve all that." The overthrow of capitalist property relations creates the indispensable premises for the abolition of national oppression. This is incontestable. But to content oneself with this statement is to betray a complete ignorance of Marxism. To advance the process of winning the leadership of the working class in the struggle for power, socialists must provide clear answers to the concrete problems which exist today, formulated in the form of a program addressed to all the important problems created by capitalism, including the national problem.

In pointing to the present hegemony of the P^C over the nationalist movement to prove the insignificance of the national struggle, this tendency on the left also helps remove the working class as an independent political force within the nationalist movement, leaving an open field

for the bourgeoisie.

At the center of the Trotskyist program there is a series of demands whose precise aim is the abolition of national oppression, threatening the workers to take leadership of the nationalist movement - to put itself at the head of an independent Quebec.

The Trade Union Movement

The trade unions are the fundamental organizations of the working class today; in Quebec they are the only mass organizations which the workers have succeeded in constructing. It is essential for Trotskyists to put forward their program in the unions, which are indispensable organizations for the working class, and indispensable for the Trotskyists' struggle for the leadership of the working class. Put work in the unions around our program is always subordinated to the political needs of building the revolutionary party, first because the revolutionary party must be built among all the oppressed layers of society, second, because the unions cannot fill the role of the party, third because they represent only 30-35 percent of the workers (in general, their upper layers).

The fundamental strategic goal of Trotskyists' programmatic intervention in the unions is the presentation of a strategy based on the class struggle and the building of a left wing capable of replacing the old leadership and transforming the unions into militant instruments of revolutionary struggle. This is based on the need to defend the unions against attack and to transform them.

From this flows a central priority of the programmatic intervention of revolutionaries in the unions: raise the union struggle to the level of a political struggle directed against the bourgeois state. An element which is key in promoting this is the concept of independent political action of the working class, which is posed concretely in Quebec in the form of the need to build a mass labor party based on the trade unions.

Two objective factors contribute to the radicalization of the unions: the rise of economic struggles, and the influence on the unions of other aspects of the struggles of the oppressed. This is why Trotskyists must combine in their trade union program economic and political demands, encompassing the broader demands of all the oppressed. This widening of the narrow trade union framework between worker and boss is indispensable to the development of socialist consciousness in the working class, and to the transformation of the unions. Concretely in Quebec, the Trotskyists must raise in the unions the need for the working class to play a vanguard role in the struggle for national liberation, and the need for the unions to support the feminist struggle, and the student struggle.

But the openings for revolutionaries in the unions remain limited, and the implantation of Trotskyists remains very weak and isolated. This situation in the unions cannot be changed by artificially directing a handful of comrades towards the unions, all the more in that the forces of the Trotskyist movement remain very limited. The situation is caused by the general political situation in Quebec and the level of consciousness of the masses. Unionists recruited by the LFO can gain a certain influence in discussions, in strikes, and sometimes in union elections, explaining the objective situation before the unions, and proposing demands of our program

which indicate the road forward. Such experiences can be of extreme value.

Further, the major actions of the union movement offer openings for large-scale revolutionary propaganda, which Trotskyists have been able to utilize to make known some key points of their program and to make new contacts in the union movement. But apart from general ongoing propaganda and propagandistic intervention into major conflicts, the principal means for Trotskyists to have their strategic role in the unions today is through the political campaigns carried out on a considerable scale outside the unions, but which can influence unionists deeply and increasingly involve them directly (e.g. the campaign for a French Quebec, the campaign for the right to abortion, the campaign against the War Measures Act, etc.). These campaigns, particularly that in defence of the French language, have already gained the Trotskyists a certain influence in the union movement. These campaigns, which are organized on the basis of united fronts, are also very useful to win the official participation of the unions and to challenge the bureaucratic leaderships.

Given the broad discussion going on in the unions on political action, it is essential to pay particular attention to the union movement, to involve them in diverse political campaigns and struggles wherever we are involved, and to raise our program for the unions wherever possible, through the newspaper, leaflets, etc. It is now still less necessary to understand well the place of the unions in our overall strategy. The union struggle does not eclipse the other struggles of the oppressed, and does not replace them, no matter what its level of development. The union struggle is only a form of the class struggle which includes, in its totality, the struggle of all the oppressed. The national struggle, like the feminist struggle, will not stop until national and women's rights are achieved.

Here are some key aspects of the I.C.'s program for the unions:

a) for unity in action: For the united fronts among the union federations. For the immediate unification of the union federations of Quebec. For full and democratic control of union affairs by the members. For an emergency congress of the union federations to adopt a defense strategy in the face of the attack of the bosses led by the Bourassa government. For parity of salaries with Montreal in every region of Quebec.

b) no to inflation: For a sliding scale of wages in relationship to the rising cost of living in every industry. For a minimum salary of \$100 a week. For the opening of the books by the unions of companies who raise prices.

c) For full employment: For the 30 hour work week, without reduction in salary. For a vast government program of public works. For unlimited unemployment insurance at union rates of pay.

d) Trade union rights: Abolish every law限制 the right to strike or limiting it (e.g. Law 19, 78, etc.). No to wage controls. No to compulsory arbitration. For the withdrawal of all charges pending against the participants in the May 1972 strike movement.

e) For an independent and French Quebec: For French as the language of work and school instruction. Complete withdrawal of Bill 63. McGill Français. For the expulsion of the Canadian army and its replacement by a popular militia controlled by the unions. For Quebec's withdrawal from

imperialist military alliances like NATO and Norad. For full control by Quebec of the areas presently under federal jurisdiction. For a monetary system and a customs system which are independent.

f) For trade union political action: For a mass workers party launched by the union federations. For a workers and farmers government.

The L.S.O.

The development of the class struggle in Quebec in recent years has reconfirmed eloquently the need for a revolutionary Marxist party, condition for the victory of the socialist revolution over the highly centralized and organized power of the bourgeoisie. Experience has also shown that the revolutionary party will not be built as the result of a spontaneous process, or the sudden appearance and confluence of the necessary components. Its construction is a painstaking and highly conscious process, which is based on the accumulation, education and testing of cadres around the full program of Marxism, as developed by revolutionary Marxists around the world through the many decades of evolution of struggles of the working class.

Since the collapse of the Communist Third International, the Trotskyist movement has preserved and developed the program of Marxism and accumulated revolutionary cadres on this basis around the world. The Trotskyist Fourth International, is the indispensable foundation for the development of the revolutionary party, which can be built only on a world scale; it is the embryo of this party, as it exists today.

The building blocks of the Fourth International are its sections in each country, whose goal is to develop into mass revolutionary parties capable of leading the socialist revolution in their country to victory. In Canada, where an oppressed nation, Quebec, is structurally assimilated into the pan-Canadian system of exploitation and oppression, under the rule of a single, centralized state apparatus, a coordinated and joint struggle is required to overthrow the federal state of the bourgeoisie -- whose defeat is a precondition for the national and social liberation of Quebec. The Trotskyists of Quebec and English Canada are joined in a common organization, the Ligue socialiste Ouvrière/League for Socialist Action, which is the nucleus of the vanguard party required to lead this revolution to victory.

The validity of the LSO's positions have been confirmed negatively by the failure of any other political tendency to develop a revolutionary organization capable of giving leadership to the mass struggles. Terrorist concepts have been put to the test in the successive "FL" experiences, and shown to be effective only in dispersing and demoralizing repeated generations of young revolutionaries. The two most publicized socialist writers, Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon, today defend opposed and equally barren theories, the former having gone into the PC on the basis of a "theory of stages" which consigns the class struggle to a later period; the latter isolated by his anti-nationalist views; neither concept capable of giving inspiration to a viable political tendency.

The opponents of the Quebec Trotskyists have given birth to a series of unstable formations of short duration, cut off in the main from the mass struggles that have rocked Quebec. The LSO's most visible socialist opponents are the pro-Moscow "Communist Party", the Maoist-Stalinist "Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)" the ultraleft, and anti-nationalist "Parti du Travail du Canada", and the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire, a formation which split from the LSO/LSA and the Fourth International in 1972.

How can a small propaganda group like the LSO develop into the mass revolutionary party required to lead the revolution to victory? No shortcut or magic formula permits a revolutionary organization to leap over the long work of painstaking accumulation and testing of cadres around the full Trotskyist program, the forging of the unity of the organization, its experience in struggle, and its roots in the mass movements. The strength and cohesion of the Trotskyist cadres is what

will make possible the organization's transformation in favorable circumstances, through fusions with tendencies moving toward revolutionary positions, and through the rapid recruitment and assimilation of whole layers of new revolutionaries coming onto the political stage for the first time. The solidity of the foundation laid today is the firmest assurance of the success in this process of party-building.

The experience and achievements of the LSO provide a firm foundation, in programmatic terms and in respect to the important layer of cadres thrown forth by the struggles, for the building of the revolutionary party in Quebec.

The Evolution of the LSO

While the LSO has not made any qualitative leaps towards its strategic goal of becoming a mass revolutionary party since the congress of 1970, it has nevertheless gone through some very important and even historic stages of this process.

Discussing the tasks of the LSO, the document set out its "responsibility of moving further into the nationalist movement in order to identify with it, defend it, and participate in all its ongoing mass actions..." (page 24). This process of sinking roots in the nationalist movement had already begun in 1969 with our support and participation in the language struggles of St-Leonard, against Bill 63, as well as the demonstration for McGill Francais, but we were still outside these movements.

It was above all during the campaign against the War Measures Act that the LSO began to take political initiatives and to play an important role in the orientation of the nationalist movement, largely through the campaign of Manon Leger, the LSC candidate for mayor of Montreal.

The initiative of the LSO and LJS on April 26, 1971, in intervening in the first session of the Parliamentary Commission on the Constitution in Montreal, reinforced the influence of the Trotskyists in the nationalist movement, so that they were able to build a united front for July 1, anniversary of the Confederation of 1867, which was able to mobilize 5,000 persons at a rally chaired by a comrade.

It was above all the formation on Sept. 1, 1971 of the Front Commun pour la Defense de la Langue Francaise (United front for the defense of the French language) with other nationalist and unionist forces that marked the establishment of the LSO as an important organization in the nationalist movement.

Aside from the leading role of the Trotskyists in the different actions and meetings of the FCDLF, including the presentation to the National Assembly of a paper against Bill 28, the LSO was invited to speak to a whole series of nationalist actions initiated by other organizations (St-Denis-sur Richelieu, St-Fustache, meetings in the schools, etc.). During the campaign to build the demonstration of October 16 alone, the members of the LSO and LJS were able to speak to more than 10,000 students in about 7 different Quebec cities.

The extension of the LSO's influence in the nationalist movement, out of proportion with its size, established the Trotskyists as the only

serious and coherent adversaries of the PC (although numerically weak within the nationalist movement, and as the only organization of the left with a revolutionary, correct policy on the national question, a policy worthy of the Leninist tradition. The goal which we set ourselves in the document of 1970 has been fully realized.

On the level of our press, the progress of the LSO has been impressive. The newspaper Liberation has been established on a monthly basis as a 12-page paper in two colors with an important subscription base. A new dimension has been added to the capacity of the LSO to propagate its ideas with the launching of a very ambitious program of pamphlet publication. Seven new pamphlets were published since 1970, and others are for seen for 1970.

In the big labor struggles, like La Frisse and the civil service, the LSO has known how to respond to the situation by intervening with the necessary proposals and by mobilizing all its forces to take advantage of every opening.

Almost since the LSO was established in Quebec at the end of 1964, the Trotskyists have been divided, with a factional struggle around basic questions of orientation. In July 1972, this factional struggle ended with the split of 3 members of the minority, followed by 7 minority members in the youth.

The youth and the lack of experience of the LSO (Quebec Trotskyism only existed before 1964 for a short-lived period after the Second World War), the immaturity of the working class and the weakness of the left, the often very bitter factional struggle, have all contributed to the slow and difficult process of political clarification, above all on the national question. This process began to draw to a close during the discussion period leading to the 10th Congress of the LSO/LSA.

It should be noted that despite its youth, the LSO has already acquired a very vast experience in election campaigns. The seriousness of the Trotskyists has also been shown by our understanding of the importance of elections and how revolutionaries can utilize them to publicize their program and organization.

The LSO ran in an election for the first time at the end of 1968 in a provincial by-election against the Minister of Education Cardinal in the riding of Bagot. The LSO next ran in April 1970 in the provincial general election, and again in October 1970 in the Montreal municipal elections where it received 7,000 votes (2% of the total). The most recent electoral experience was the federal campaign of October 1972 when the LSO presented a candidate in the riding of Montreal-Lafontaine.

The numerical growth of the LSO since the 1970 congress has been very modest, despite the other progress and despite a significant political maturing of its leading cadres. This slow numerical growth is due above all to the external political situation, rather than to internal problems. It is a problem that all left tendencies face; none of them is significantly stronger than the LSO. While it is impossible to predict at what moment the political development of the LSO and its wider influence will bear fruit in qualitative terms, it is nevertheless possible to outline certain general tasks which are necessary to build the LSO.

Building the LSO

The LSO is, and will remain for a whole period to come, a propaganda group which will recruit individuals or small groups, a group whose main

~~external task is the presentation of our general ideas, of our overall action program for the masses, and of our strategy of mass action, to a relatively limited audience of young militants who are more politicized and who are in the vanguard of the struggles.~~ *why only to these people? (A)*

Whether our propaganda is directed at a small vanguard or at the broad masses, it is based on a class-struggle program, that is, one that aims to advance the masses on the road to the seizure of power.

~~Even if our daily practical work is largely limited to the more politicized elements, that must not lead us to renounce our overall perspective which is based on the objective necessities of the struggle for socialism, (B) a struggle which demands the participation and the mobilization of broad, conscious masses.~~

Our work is not limited to the presentation of ideas. We attempt to make our program a living reality, through our use of it in intervening in the class struggle, in orienting our work of building the mass movements and providing them with a revolutionary orientation. In that way our program acts as a bridge between the current level of the struggles and the consciousness of the masses, on the one hand; and their mobilization in the socialist revolution on the other.

In other words, the LSO must not adapt its program and strategy to the immaturity of the masses by accepting it and building a theory around it; the result of such an approach would be the adaptation of our program to the consciousness of the most advanced elements, who are often isolated and sometimes full of ultraleftist illusions. The LSO must address these elements who are the most open to our ideas in order to win them to our program and to the necessity of reaching out to the masses. *We will win them over*

(C) by being effective in the mass struggles, not by joining their isolation

The principal propaganda instruments are the paper, election campaigns, the weekly Tribunes and leaflet distributions. Polemics carried on against organized opponents of the left are essential if we are to win hegemony in the vanguard, but more consistent and better balanced polemics than we have carried out in the past.

The nature of the present period in Quebec, a period set off by a general rise in the level of the struggle and by a very extended radicalization and nationalist sentiment, does not permit the LSO to play a passive or strictly propagandist role. Above all, in the case of the nationalist movement and the student movement, opportunities for agitational work and for the initiation of mass actions are presented to us, in which the LSO will have the possibility to make known one or two particular points of this program to a mass audience, and even to urge the masses to act on the basis of these points.

The LSO is a cadre organization of which the principal internal task is intensive political and theoretical training of its membership with the view of creating leaders capable of developing contacts with the most advanced elements outside the organization. "These cadres remain the backbone of the party just as much in periods of quiescence as in periods of expansion. The vitality of such a party is proven by its capacity to grow, to extend its leadership and to reproduce qualified leaders from one generation to another." (Cannon)

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. why (can we present our program) only to these people? (the young politicized militants)
- B. Our mass work isn't limited this way (only to politicized elements)
- C. We will win them over by being effective in the mass struggles, not by joining their isolation

In the process of the creation, of the consolidation and of the extension of the initial cadres, members are filtered and selected by means of the various tests and experiences provided by the mass movement, by the internal debates and bitter conflicts which grow out of critical political problems raised at every turn of the class struggle.

This stage in the construction of the LSO cannot be "leaped over", but it can be accomplished and must be accomplished in preparation for, and in relationship with openings for agitation and interventions within the mass movement.

Laying the necessary basis for the future expansion of our press must be placed among the tasks to be carried out in the next period. Although not seen for the immediate upcoming period, the general outlines of this expansion should be laid out consciously now. The three elements of this expansion are: a) The maintenance of the publication program of both classics and specifically Quebec topics in pamphlets; b) The launching of the bi-monthly 8-page paper; c) The reinforcement of the paper and pamphlets with theoretical articles, etc.

For the immediate period ahead, the principal source of new cadre forces will remain the student movement, observation from which flows the necessity to allocate our resources and to reinforce our collaboration with the youth organization the LJS. Our weak understanding of the strategic importance of the student movement for the construction of the revolutionary party, as well as the dispersion of the few student comrades among many schools and campuses, has contributed to a lack of direction in the work of the LJS which will be necessary to correct.

Even though the working class is beginning to become interested in politics, it is still incapable of independent politics and still largely closed to recruitment by the vanguard organization. It is among students, the most mobile layer of society, the most radicalized, the most ready for mobilization in the streets, and the most likely to break from bourgeois politics that we are likely to find recruits to the revolutionary organization.

Even though the working class is in the early stages of a process of politicization, opportunities for recruiting trade unionists to a vanguard organization remain very limited. It is among students, the most mobile layer of society, the most radicalized, the most ready for mobilization in the streets, and the most likely at this moment to break from bourgeois politics, that we are likely to find recruits to the revolutionary organization.

The YS/LJS, as an organization independent of the LSA/LSO but in political solidarity with it and with the world Trotskyist movement, is the instrument that can establish Trotskyism in the student movement and bring to the LSO future cadres.

The LSO must maintain its orientation to the women's liberation movement and continue to support and aid every initiative capable of accelerating the birth of a mass feminist movement in Quebec. As an organization entirely committed to the welfare of the working masses and of all the victims of oppression, the LSO must follow very closely the development of feminism and allocate the necessary resources, for the new crisis of capitalism in Quebec strikes most heavily at women, not only as workers, but also as housewives, as students and as unemployed.

As the Transitional Program says, in speaking of the importance of consistent work among youth and among women, "They (the sections of the Fourth International) will find there inexhaustable sources of devotion, of self-sacrifice." (A) *so little analysis?*

(B)

- Quebec is an "internalized" colony in North America? (not like a normal colony - because of relative weight of proletariat, but it is a resource base & lower-wage area).
- for the moment, the openings for socialists in the nationalist movement are reduced (increasing strength of PQ)
- socialists must remain independent of the PQ
- T.C. leadership could have extended strike by appealing to other sectors & by carrying a more united action?
- LSO - propaganda group => pose labor party, put forward labor strategy to defend nationalist struggle, transitional labor program, mass action perspective (counters PQ).
- what about the Citizens' Inquiry into the WMA? What is the balance sheet?

NOTES by Gord D.

- A. So how come so little analysis?
- B. (Summarizing the points): Quebec is an "internalized" colony within North America? (not like a normal colony, because of the relative weight of the proletariat, but it is a resource base & lower-wage area).
 - =for the moment, the openings for socialists in the nationalist movement are reduced (due to the) (increasing strength of the Parti Québécois)
 - =socialists must remain independent of the PQ
 - =The Trade union leadership could have extended (general public sector) strike by appealing to other sectors and carrying a more united action?
 - =/(We, the) LSO (are a) propaganda group - (we must) pose (a Quebec-based) labor party, and put forward a labor strategy to defend the nationalist struggles, (by means of a) transitional labor program, (with a) mass action perspective (which) (counters the PQ)
 - =what about Citizens' Inquiry into the WMA? (War Measures Act)? What is the balance sheet?